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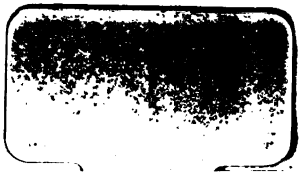

MISCELLANEOUS SERMONS

BY

Clergymen of the Church of England.

EDITED BY THE

REV. FREDERICK GEORGE LEE, F.S.A.,

INCUMBENT OF S. JOHN'S, ABERDEEN,

AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF MORTON.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD JOHN MANNERS, M.P.,

ETC., ETC., ECT.,

THIS VOLUME

IS

DEDICATED,

WITH VERY SINCERE AND CORDIAL RESPECT,

BY

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE.

THIS collection of Sermons has been made by the Editor, and is now published in order to obtain funds for the erection of schools and an orphanage in connection with the Church of which he has been recently appointed the Incumbent. Their title abundantly indicates their character. They are strictly miscellaneous in subject, being contributed by various Clergymen of the Church of England, whom the Editor is proud to be allowed to number amongst his personal friends; and to whom, both individually and collectively, he here returns his most cordial thanks for their kindnesses.

As the readers of the volume may possibly wish to know for whom the various initials at the end of each sermon stand, the following acknowledgments are made at length.

For Sermon No. I. the Editor is indebted to the Rev. John Charles Chambers, M.A., late Chancellor of S. Ninian's Cathedral, at Perth, and now Incumbent of S. Mary's, Soho. For Sermon No. II. to the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, M.A., one of the Missionary Priests at S. George's Mission. For Sermon No. III. to the Rev. John Purchas, M.A., of Merton House, Granchester, Editor of the *Directorium Anglicanum*. For the fourth Sermon to the Rev. John Larking Latham, M.A., Oxon., of East Malling, in Kent. For the fifth, to the Rev. John Edwards, Jun., M.A., of Prestbury Priory, near Cheltenham, recently Curate of S. Paul's, Knightsbridge. The sixth Sermon is from the pen of the Rev. Addington R. P. Venables, M.A., of Exeter College, Oxford. The eighth is by the Rev. R. M. Benson, M.A., Student of Christ Church, and Vicar of Cowley, in Oxfordshire. For the ninth Sermon the Editor is indebted to the Rev. J. H. Blunt, M.A., Author of "The Atonement and the At-One-Maker." For the tenth, to the Rev. Bryan King, M.A., Rector of S. George's in the East. For the eleventh, to the Rev. W. Baird, B.A., late Scholar of Lincoln College, and now Curate of S. Matthew's, City Road, London. For the twelfth, to the newly-appointed Vicar of S. Saviour's, Leeds, the Rev. Richard Collins, M.A. For the thirteenth, to the Rev. Charles Lyford, M.A., formerly of S. Barnabas', Pimlico, and now of S. Bartholomew's, Moorfields. His thanks are due likewise

to the Rev. T. W. Perry, of Addington, near Winslow, Bucks, the Author of "Lawful Church Ornaments," for the fourteenth sermon; as well as to the Rev. William Borrow, B.A., of Westlington, near Aylesbury, in the same county, for the fifteenth. The sixteenth Sermon, on a subject now frequently discussed, "the Eternity of Punishment," was written by the Editor's grandfather, the late Rev. T. T. Lee, B.D., Vicar of Thame, Oxfordshire, and appears to be a good specimen of the dogmatic Sermons of the latter part of the last century. For the seventeenth, the Editor has to express his acknowledgments to the Rev. Charles Gutch, B.D., Senior Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and of All Saints', Margaret Street; for the eighteenth, to the Rev. Orby Shipley, M.A., the Editor of "Eucharistic Litanies;" for the nineteenth, to the Rev. Warwick R. Wroth, B.A., Incumbent of S. Philip's, Clerkenwell; for the twentieth, to the Rev. T. Dove-Dove, M.A., formerly of Frome Selwood, who so nobly went to the assistance of the Rector of S. George's in the East, in his recent almost unparalleled persecutions; and for the twenty-second to the Rev. R. F. Littledale, M.A., of S. Mary's, Soho.

Sermons VII., XXI., XXIII., and XXIV. are from the pen of the Editor.

It now only remains humbly to commend the volume and the object for which it is published to the care and benediction of Almighty God; and to ask, in charity,

those of the faithful into whose hands the book may fall, neither to forget in their prayers—which are much needed—the good estate of the Church in Scotland, nor him, most unworthy, who has been recently called to minister at her altars.

F. G. L.

FOUNTAIN HALL, ABERDEEN,
Feast of the
Most Holy Name of Jesus, 1860.

ERRATUM.

Page 68, last line, *for* "A. V. R. P." *read* "A. R. P. V."

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SERMON I.

THE WAY TO THE FATHER.

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"NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME."

THESE words seem such household phrases, that you might hardly look for anything new by way of comment upon them. They tell us, you will say, that faith in JESUS CHRIST is the only means of apprehending GOD. We must feel our sin, and our consequent need of a SAVIOUR, and so come by Him to the FATHER. By believing in the SON of GOD we are reconciled to Him Who begat the SON. By nature we are far off from GOD; but when we believe in the Only-Begotten, we are made nigh thereby. Again, we learn in these words that prayer in the Name of CHRIST is the only way of approaching GOD. It is only through JESUS CHRIST that GOD hears us. If we did not conclude our petitions with His prevailing Name, they would be in vain. Now this is pretty nearly all that the popular religious mind sees in these pregnant words of our LORD and Master. There is yet another not uncommon explanation, and this embraced usually by those who are more

for making Christianity a practical system. When we follow our LORD'S example in His life and death,—when we become His Gospel stereotyped in our own every-day conversation, in our relations with our family, our friends, our dependents, and all with whom we have to do,—then we come unto the FATHER by Him. It is idle mockery to pretend, while we lead unchristian lives, to come unto the FATHER only by faith in CHRIST, or by prayer through CHRIST.

There is, however, a deeper and more hidden meaning than these; and the very way in which these meanings are usually grasped at, instead thereof, shows how difficult and hard it is to attain to the full knowledge of its mystery. Our LORD says, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the FATHER;" thus attesting His own equality with the FATHER. Yet by Him alone can we come to the FATHER. "How can we come by Thee," we might cry out, "to the FATHER, since Thou hast ascended far above all heavens? If Thou art no longer on earth, how canst Thou be a way for us to walk in, a path for the ransomed to pass over? How can we attain Thee in any wise, so as to be filled by Thee, influenced by Thee, guided, fashioned, changed by Thee? Of ourselves we cannot think, believe, act towards Thee. The very stirring of the all but cold embers of our emotions and feelings must come from Thee. How then can we come by Thee to the FATHER? How can we connect ourselves with Thee? How is this link to be welded and knit together?" We must seek for an answer to all this in the mystery of the Incarnation, and of the Sacraments, which are its extension. In the well-known language of S. Augustine, CHRIST GOD is the place to which we go, CHRIST Man the way by which we go.

By that Flesh which JESUS assumed of the Blessed Mary, His Virgin Mother, must we go to GOD. If we have no portion in that Sacred Humanity, we shall have no participation in His Divine Nature. Out of that Ark is no salvation. Unless we can be placed as stones in that Temple, which was destroyed and rebuilt in three days, we shall share in no eternal Alleluias.

Now no act of faith, no fervent prayer can ordinarily commence our individual and personal union with the GOD-Manhood of CHRIST. As He took upon Him really and substantially flesh of S. Mary, so must we in like manner be invested with that life-giving Body. It must be a real incorporation into Him; it must be nothing shadowy or impalpable. As real as CHRIST'S own Incarnation must our Deification be. When this doctrine is fully accepted, all other difficulties of the Catholic Faith are smoothed away. JESUS then lives and moves within us, and is our being. "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST in me;" not in figure or sacrament, but in deed and in truth. Nothing but a *substantial* communication of the Sacred Humanity to our poor diseased and degraded natures can meet their wants and necessities. See how wonderfully this supported the martyrs. Felicitas said to those who reproved her while crying out in the pangs of labour, "O Felicitas, how will you endure your pains to-morrow, when you and your seven children will be led forth to execution?" "Ah," she rejoined, "to-day it is Felicitas who suffers; to-morrow CHRIST will suffer in Felicitas."

No feelings, emotions, or moral habits are sufficient in themselves to lead us up to GOD, and endue us with supernatural force. There have been bold and brave men in every country, and of every conceivable religion.

Christianity differs from all other religions, in that her naturally weak and cowardly professors assume, through her influences, the contrary virtues. Look at the Apostles: contrast their conduct before and after the completion of the Incarnate Life within them, after the Spirit had descended and embodied them into the Man CHRIST JESUS. Saul, king of Israel, after he was inspired by the Spirit, became another man. The Apostles in like manner, and in a more surprising degree, became other men after the day of Pentecost. They who fled and forsook their Master at His apprehension and betrayal, became, after that day, so bold that in His absence, they shrunk from no testimony to His Name. Peter, whose heart failed him in the judgment-hall when faced by a few servants warming themselves and gossiping round the fire, after his union with CHRIST was consolidated, bids his executioner add to his last sufferings, and render his death more painful than that of his LORD. Thus it was that Christian martyrs, of every age, and every country, and every condition, came by the GOD-MAN to the FATHER.

Now there are many who believe that in Holy Baptism we are made nigh to GOD; that by the humiliation of the SON we have been exalted, and that by His Incarnation we have been deified; and yet, for all this, when they come to the Sacrament of the Altar, they eliminate the Flesh of the Incarnate JESUS, and so do not come there by Him to the FATHER. They reverse the scriptural order; they propose to come to Him by the FATHER; they thereby break up and destroy, so far as in them lies, that "new and living way, which He hath consecrated through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh," and bridge over the chasm which they have

riven by another invented by themselves which is virtual, and, as they speak, equivalent.[1]

As we have said of the Christian that his union with CHRIST must be real and substantial, or there can be no identity, no oneness like that of the vine and its branches; so we say of the nourishment and healing of his soul, by touching JESUS in Holy Communion. It is not by symbols or figures, or signs of CHRIST absent, that we can touch Him, or feel that we are "whole of our plagues." From the time that we were grafted into Him as wild olive trees into the root and fatness of the good olive tree, our incorporation into CHRIST'S Sacred Manhood is so real and substantial, that His acts become ours, and ours in some sense His. What is said of Him is said of us. We are said to have been born, to suffer, to have been crucified, to have died, to have been buried, to have risen again. Even the sinner is charged with having made the members of CHRIST the members of an harlot, and to have pierced the SAVIOUR with his sins. Nay, it is because of our oneness with CHRIST'S Manhood that we on Calvary were washed and cleansed by His Divine Blood, as it flowed from His five most blessed Wounds over His and our Humanity. Thus He promised to "give His Flesh for the life of the world:" as our Church teaches, "not only to die for us, but also to be our food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament;"[2] once in a bloody manner, now in an unbloody manner; once on the Cross, now in the Holy Eucharist; by the same Priest and Victim then and now; then physically

[1] Of this theory, which supposes that a *new* Body is formed for our LORD out of bread and wine by the power of the HOLY GHOST, Waterland observed that it involves "a kind of *impanation* of the Spirit."

[2] Exhortation in the Communion Service.

and carnally, now spiritually and transcendentally. Still the law of mediation is in full force. "No man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me." Our feeding on Him is the sequence of the Incarnation: "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." And nothing more exhibits the latent heresy which is so energetic in our days than that Nestorian-like attempt which has been made to divide His Person, and to extract the only link which is common to GOD and ourselves in the chain of eternity.[1] Even Calvin and his party held that the faithful "communicated with His Body and Blood, no less than with His Spirit, that thus they might be in possession of WHOLE CHRIST."[2]

In like manner Luther and his followers maintained that "the Body and Blood of CHRIST are *really* and *substantially* present in the Supper of the LORD,"[3] and repudiated and condemned the error "that the SON of GOD was only present on earth in His Divine Nature, or that CHRIST, so far as concerned His Human Nature, had nothing more to do with us after He redeemed us by His Death and Passion."[4] Hooker too, who leaned more to Calvin than to Luther in this matter, insists that CHRIST imparts Himself in the Eucharist to the receiver, "even *His Whole Entire Person:*"[5] and Bishop Andrewes doubts not to affirm that in the Holy Mys-

[1] S. Cyril says against Nestorius: "We receive the Eucharist as the true life-giving and *proper* Flesh of the Word Himself. For as GOD He was naturally the principle of Life, and since He has become one with His own Flesh, He has rendered IT also Life-giving."—Ep. Syn. Alex.

[2] Epist. p. 396, ap. Collier, 275. See also Institutes, iv. xvii. 7, 8, 9, where after S. Cyril he urges: "CHRIST'S *Flesh* is as it were a wealthy and exhaustless fountain, whereby that life, which dwells in Deity as its source, is transfused into us."

[3] Confess. Augsburg. [4] Formul. Concord. de Person. Christi.

[5] V. 67, § 7.

teries we are to *bow*, not only because His NAME is there, but because His BODY and BLOOD, His SOUL and His DEITY are there."[1] And that these are communicated to us under the form of bread and wine in the Eucharist, is the doctrine not only of the ancient Catholics, but also of the first Protestants. "Is not the bread," S. Paul asks, "the communication of the Body of CHRIST?" S. Ignatius says that "the Docetæ abstained from the Eucharist because they did not believe that it was the Flesh of CHRIST Which suffered and was raised again." Justin Martyr, after saying that the bread and wine are "*not common* bread and wine," asserts afterwards that "when they have been eucharistised they are the Flesh and Blood of the Incarnate JESUS." S. Irenæus says that the bread after consecration is "*no longer common* bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly." And this very form of Eucharistic belief was taken by the orthodox during the Monophysite controversy as an argument for our LORD's twofold natures in one Person. "From this sacramental union," says Bishop Andrewes (he had just before called it a kind of hypostatical union,) "of the sign and the thing signified do the Fathers borrow their resemblance to illustrate by it the personal union in CHRIST. That even, as in the Eucharist, neither part is evacuate or *turned into the other*, but abide each still in his former nature and substance; no more is either of CHRIST's natures annulled, or one of them converted into the other (as Eutyches held), but each nature remaineth (still) full and whole in his own kind. And backwards; as the two natures in CHRIST, *so the signum and signatum in the Sacrament à converso*."[2]

[1] Serm. ix. of the Resurrection. [2] Serm. xvi. of the Nativity.

This argument, on which Protestant and Protesting Catholic (if I may so say) divines have insisted so much by way of proof that Transubstantiation (or the change of substance of bread and wine) had not entered into people's minds in those days, though the confusion of our LORD's Natures had, is valueless, if the real absence of the Body and Blood be taught instead of the Real Presence. The Lutheran divines use this argument in proof of there being "in the Sacred Supper two different substances, the bread and the Body of CHRIST present at once on earth."[1] Clear as this controversy of fourteen centuries ago is against any change of substance of the bread and wine, it is equally clear in behalf of the Presence of CHRIST's Body and Blood. And so thought those Protestants who three hundred years ago avowed that they selected the very phrases (such as CHRIST's Body being present and exhibited *under, with* or *in* the bread) which now give so much offence to ignorant or prejudiced persons, "on purpose to reject the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation."[2] No one is more against this Roman theory than Bishop Jeremy Taylor; yet what bolder language can be found as to the presence of CHRIST's Body? "There is but one Body of CHRIST, natural and glorified. He that says that Body is glorified Which was crucified, says It is the same Body but *not after the same manner:* and *so it is in the Sacrament:* we eat and drink the Body and Blood of CHRIST That was broken and poured forth, for there is no other Body, no other Blood of CHRIST; but though it is the Same Which we eat and drink, yet *it is in another manner;* and therefore when any of the Protestant divines deny that Body

[1] Formul. Concord. de Cœna Domini. [2] Ib.

Which was born of the Virgin Mary, That Which was crucified, to be eaten in the Sacrament, *the meaning is easy, they intend that it is* NOT *eaten in a* natural *sense.*"[1] Once all Protestant divines were agreed (Bishop Overall testifies,) "that upon the words of consecration the Body and Blood of CHRIST is *really* and *substantially* present, not after a physical and sensual, but after a heavenly, invisible, and incomprehensible manner."[2] They did indeed dispute, he adds, whether this Presence was only in the use of the Sacrament and in the act of eating, or otherwise. But he declares—and let us remember that he was the compiler of the sacramental portion of our Catechism—that some Lutherans, and all Calvinists "depart from all antiquity, which place the Presence of CHRIST in the virtue of the words of consecration and benediction used by the priests, and *not in the use of the eating* of the Sacrament; for they tell us that the virtue of that Sacrament is not lost, though the Sacrament be reserved either for sick persons or others."

By CHRIST then present in Holy Communion we go to the FATHER, not in figure or in symbol, but "verily and indeed." By partaking of His Flesh and Blood only, the seed of our regeneration increases and fructifies. It is the mode by which GOD changes and transubstantiates us into Himself, so that we renew continually our participation of the Divine Nature. As the magnetic iron loses its virtue and requires to be renewed by the loadstone, so we in like manner need continual reparations of that supernatural might which lies hid even in the fringe of CHRIST'S garments, and goeth out of Him to heal and strengthen us. And in-

[1] Taylor, ix. p. 431. [2] Cosins, v. p. 131.

deed as is the disease so is the remedy. As partakers of the flesh of the First Adam we die, as partakers of the Flesh of the Second Man we live. The union of our flesh with that of CHRIST repairs all ill which is owing to the union of our flesh with that of Adam. Adam imparted to us deformity, pain, and death. CHRIST restores to us beauty, impassibility, and immortality. When our flesh touches His, He makes our faces like that of Moses, to be resplendent with more than earthly loveliness: S. Stephen's countenance, at his martyrdom, became like that of an Angel: we cease to feel our sufferings: death is only the door to eternal life. Nor only so: CHRIST's soul touches ours, and He henceforth thinks, judges, feels, acts and lives in it. His Soul is the soul of our soul. The mind is enlightened; the heart is remade; the storm of passions, so evil and corrupt, is hushed; the fires of lust are quenched; the perverse will is bent, and seeks good with more ardour than it followed after evil. And CHRIST crowns all by imparting to us His Divinity. Only His Whole and Undivided Self communicated to us could fit us at last to "sit down with Him on His throne." Only so could we come by Him in the highest and most glorious sense to the FATHER.[1] Nor is it only in this Sacrament that the GOD-MAN thus unites us to GOD. Since He has united Himself to our humanity, we know not by what other wondrous and unsearchable ways the stream of His life floweth from His Sacred Heart into the veins of His brethren: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy

[1] How much all this was realised by the early Christians we may see by deacons carrying out the Body and Blood to the sick, or by the laity in times of persecution communicating themselves of the holy elements which they were allowed to take home.

footsteps are not known." As He fed the people in the wilderness with manna when ordinary food was impossible, so He still rains down invisible and extraordinary supplies of that life to them who are in a "barren and dry ground where no water is." "Lo! I am with you all days," is His parting promise. Wherever men go out of themselves and present themselves as empty vessels to be filled by Him, He in measure and degree enters in by that open door and sups with them, and they with Him. "CHRIST shall dwell in your hearts by faith." With the centurion, they may believe that though absent, He can heal them. Though they cannot do more, they can still look at Him on the Cross, as the Israelites at the brazen serpent, and be cured. It is thus that He is the daily or supersubstantial bread which we ask the FATHER to give us day by day: the ceaseless food and sustenance of those whom He has redeemed and regenerated.

Yet we could not thus come by Him to the FATHER unless He were ever reconciling us to GOD by His own Blood. We could not eat at His Table thus continually, unless His Sacrifice was abiding on the Altar. Thus it is that in heaven He is exhibited "as a Lamb slain;" a perpetual Passover, that we may ever keep the Feast. Blessed and wondrous as was that reconciliation which He effected on the Cross, when He became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, at once a Priest and a Victim on Calvary, no less wondrous is that ministry of our Great High Priest, whereby, having carried His oblation of Himself into the Holy of Holies, to present it to the FATHER, He *is* still the propitiation: He has been set forth as a *mercy-seat*[1] through faith in

[1] ἱλαστήριον. Rom. iii. 25.

His Blood. He makes an atonement for our sins there, as He had before made an atonement on earth.[1] The Great Day of Expiation ever goes on in heaven. Ever since the Great Intercessor entered in within the veil, covered with His own Blood, the people of GOD have been waiting in awe and expectation till the seventh trumpet shall have sounded, and "the mystery of GOD shall be finished, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST, and He shall reign for ever and ever."[2] Until then, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stands the "Lamb as it had been slain."[3] It is because our LORD in heaven thus perpetually offers and represents the Sacrifice of the Cross to the FATHER, that we come boldly to the throne of grace, knowing that we have such a ceaseless Mediator and Reconciler. When we conclude our prayers in His efficacious Name, it is still with the thought that we are powerfully reminding the FATHER of the Sacrifice of His SON. It is the Blood of our Abel that crieth unto Him from the ground, and speaketh better things in our behalf. "Look on the face of Thy CHRIST," is the voice of the soul to GOD, as it ventures to offer praises and thanksgivings, prayers and supplications, alms and sufferings, tears and penance. Faith brings the Christian into the midst of the heavenly assembly, and shows to him, as it showed to S. Stephen in his death-thrall, JESUS *standing* on the Right Hand of GOD; and in the fulness of that vision of the Lamb slain, he bursts forth into the strong litany, "Thou that *takest* away the sins of the world, have mercy, hear, and spare."

[1] Lev. xvi. 14, et seq.
[2] Rev. x. 7; xi. 15.
[3] Rev. v. 6.

At all times and in all places the thought of this never-ceasing oblation consoles, strengthens, supports, converts. There is One ever living to make intercession for us. He needs no Aaron or Hur to stay up His hands, for they are ever lifted up; He is never weary of being our Advocate with the FATHER. It is that which reproduces, as it were, the Crucifixion scene still on the stage of this world, and intensifies our Good Friday commemorations. Any transaction in which GOD is concerned cannot but have the stamp of eternity upon it. Even by anticipation the GOD-MAN is "the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world.*" In heaven He is still a Lamb. There is the throne of the Lamb; the marriage of the Lamb; the Lamb is the Temple; the Lamb is the light thereof; the Lamb will feed them. Nay, the very words, "washed in the Blood of the Lamb," so familiar to us, attest the continuity of the Atonement; so that His Blood-shedding is, in a manner, a still present transaction. It could not be so had our LORD been a mere man. But just because He is GOD as well as Man does He still *take* away the sins of the world, still wash generation after generation in His own most precious Blood. It is the mystery indicated in those deep and incontrovertible words of S. Paul, "GOD purchased the Church by HIS OWN Blood."

By Him, then, as He appears in the Presence of GOD for us,—as He offers Himself for us,—let us come to the FATHER. Especially in the Holy Eucharist let us do so, where the heavenly oblation is represented here below, under earthly types and forms, to aid our faith.[1]

[1] Not only do divines like Taylor, Cosin, Overall, Thorndike, and Grabe state that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is propitiatory, but the present Bishop of Exeter warns us to "be very careful how we deny a pro-

Let us fail not there to offer Him to the FATHER, as the only price and ransom, the only worthiness, the only satisfaction, the only praise, the only plea. Most mercifully is His sacrifice of Himself once offered there recalled to our memories, lest we should forget that we have a Priest for ever, and a ceaseless oblation. Let us offer Him to the FATHER, and Him alone: His Virtues, His Merits, His Wounds, His Stripes, His Tears, His drops of Bloody Sweat, all most precious and valuable in the sight of the FATHER. Let us offer the GOD-MAN to GOD;[1] He is the Lamb without blemish and without spot, the only acceptable offering. Where He is "eaten and worshipped," there is no fear of the destroying angel. Not by our works of righteousness, not by our labours, not by our sufferings, not by our tears, not by our prayers; but by Thee, O GOD-MAN, do we come to the FATHER. Nothing of our own have we to offer to GOD so precious as His SON, Who gave Himself for us, not only as our Ransom, but to be our Food. Let us give Him back to GOD. Look not, O FATHER, on us sinners, but on the Face of Thy CHRIST, Who in mystery lies on the Altar.[2] Whilst we

pitiatory virtue to it;" and that "the consecrated elements ought not to be separated in our minds from the propitiation for our sins, continually presented for us before the throne of GOD."—*Pastoral Letter*, 1851.

[1] "Let us follow Him for our pattern, *offer Him for our price*, receive Him for our sacramental Food, and wait for Him as our endless and exceeding great Reward."—*Andrewes' Sermon on Nativity.*

[2] "In the Sacrament that Body Which is reigning in heaven is exposed upon the Table of Blessing: and His Body Which was broken for us, is now broken again, and yet remaining impassible."—*Jeremy Taylor, Life of Christ*, iii. 15, 4.

Bishop Andrewes distinguishes between Roman and Anglican doctrine by telling Cardinal Bellarmine—"We indeed both adore the

beseech Thee for Thy *whole* Church, regard not us, but Him. "Remember all His offerings; accept His Burnt Sacrifice." So shalt Thou show us the Path of Life; for in Thy Presence now and ever is the fulness of joy, and at Thy Right Hand there is pleasure for evermore. Amen.

J. C. C.

Flesh of CHRIST with Ambrose, and also not *It* but *Him* Who is worshipped on the Altar." For it is amiss in the Cardinal to ask *what* is there worshipped, the question should have been Who, since Nazianzen says not *It* but *Him*. Nor do we eat Flesh before we have adored, with Augustine, and yet *none of us adore the Sacrament*.—Ad Bell. 267.

SERMON II.

THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

S. LUKE VII. 15.

"HE THAT WAS DEAD SAT UP, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK."

THE words of the Holy Gospel give us an account of the wonderful work which our LORD, moved by Divine love, wrought for one whom He found already in the hands of death.

The whole event is told us in very few words, but in words which describe brightly and clearly that which took place. We seem ourselves to stand by the gate of the city—to see the sad train drawing near with its mournful burden,—to be struck by the Form of One Who draws near to the bier on which the dead is laid, —to notice the almost involuntary act of those who bear him, stopping as soon as the Stranger touched the bier,—to hear that Stranger's word, and see its strange effect. The words indeed are very few, and quickly uttered; yet well may they make us start: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Who is this that saith even to the dead, arise?

Yet stranger still must it have been to those present,

who hearing these words, coming as it seemed from a man like themselves, beheld at once the dead obey, and sit upright upon the bier whereon he was carried.

But this record is given to us, not merely that we may look upon it as a wonderful exercise of the LORD's power and love. It is this doubtless. In this and such like works our LORD did doubtless show forth His Divinity in a way which none could gainsay; and, by the exercise of His love, touch the hearts no less than the understandings of the people. But if these had been their sole use, we might think that they altogether failed in the object for which our LORD wrought them. The people saw, and "fear fell on them all, and they glorified GOD, saying, That GOD hath visited His people." Nor did they stop here. They spread abroad this same rumour of Him "throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about." Yet it was in Jerusalem, in the very chief city of Judæa, when it was thronged with people from these parts come to keep the feast, that this same Prophet suffered death by the desire of the people.

These sacred histories, then, are the property of the Church of CHRIST in all ages, and as belonging to her they have a much higher and more spiritual meaning than they appear to have if we look at them merely as narratives of past events. Let us try by the help of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT to understand this passage as it concerns ourselves.

I. We look then, first at the party who are coming forth out of the city,—the widowed mother, her lifeless son, the attendants who carry him out to bury him.

1. In the widowed mother we see the Church. Her LORD is taken from her for a season into heaven, while

she is left to mourn and to care only for the children whom she nourishes and brings up for her LORD'S sake. His they are, and she knows that He has given them into her charge that she may tend them for Him. Her love for Him is now manifested in earnest yearning love for these His children. And who are the children whom she thus tenderly brings up? Are not even we, each and all of us? We are they whom the LORD hath begotten anew unto Himself. He has given us to the Church that we may look to her as our mother, and receive from her the nourishment and the loving tender care which we need.

2. And whom does the son set before us? The mother is following to the grave her child, her only begotten child. That is, the Church is here weeping over the fate of one of those children whom the LORD has given her. GOD the HOLY GHOST speaks of an only son, to show us that the Church loves each child whom the LORD has given her with a love faintly typified to us by the love of the tenderest of mothers for her only-begotten child. This only child, so tenderly loved, she has seen seized by some mortal disease, under which his vigour has sunk daily more and more. She has seen his failing appetite, his wasting strength, his sinking eye, till at last the hand of death is clearly upon him, and his body must be carried forth to the burial.

So does the Church watch her child, when the deadly disease of sin has laid its hand upon him. She sees the first tokens of the evil, which creeping into his life at length destroys it. She sees the soul grow listless and indifferent to spiritual things, and eager for fleshly indulgences; she sees the first wayward desire unchecked by the fear of GOD; she sees the first tampering with

sin, when the soul tries to have its unhallowed enjoyment here, and yet not forfeit its hope of happiness hereafter. And then she sees next how these first few steps, which seem to man so small, have dulled the spiritual sight, have sapped the foundation of the spiritual life, have separated between the soul and Him Who is the life of that soul. She sees little sins become great ones; sins of thoughtlessness become sins of deliberation; heedless sins become wilful sins; sins which do not destroy spiritual life at once become sins which do. And so she has nothing left but to weep and mourn as for the death of an only-begotten son.

Look then upon this young man, not one who has grown old, and seen himself sink year by year deeper and deeper in his grave, but one who has lived as young men do live, trusting in his strength, counting on many years of manhood yet to come, saying that he "shall never be moved." So does the sinner go to the grave of his soul. Lightly and cheerfully he goes with mirth and gladness. For a little while perhaps his conscience suffered him not to rest, but since he has quieted that all has gone smoothly with him. He listens to the flattering voice of his friends, and delights himself in the flowery paths of sin. All the time that sin has been making its deadly inroads upon his soul, he has known nothing of it. He has perhaps kept up some outward form of godliness: he has been, perhaps, regular in coming to Church, or in the daily heartless performance of some private act of prayer—an act coming from no craving of the soul for Divine support or union with God, and bringing back to him from God no enlightenment of the understanding, or kindling of love. It may even be that he has dared in the midst of his sin to keep up a

formal, lifeless, ay, deadening reception of the most blessed Sacrament of his SAVIOUR'S Body and Blood. In these or some other way he has drawn closely round him the robe of self-deceit, so that he has never seen how his soul, once made so fair in the Blood of CHRIST, is becoming more hideously deformed than ever. Sin has been to the soul a secret wasting disease, which—while it consumes the life—buoys us up with a false hope, as though all would be well at last. But the end is, alas! as in the Gospel, the Church is left to mourn her son!

3. And who are they who bear the young man to his grave?

They are the passions of the heart, which we at first guide to such objects as we choose, but which, when once they have gained power over us, carry us whithersoever they will. We become in their hands as the dead body in the hands of its bearers. We have surrendered to them our power, and they use it with murderous harshness over us. Let us see, then, while yet there is time, whither our passions are hurrying us—to our grave. Not, it may be, to that grave where the body turns to dust till the day of its resurrection; but to a deeper, darker grave, wherein we are burying our soul for ever.

But here, again, when all human hope is gone, the Gospel has fresh hope for us. Sometimes, indeed,—and that, too, most often, we must fear,—the dark cloud which sin has drawn around the soul remains there for ever, and is swallowed up in the blackness of eternal death. The sinner goes on for a time, heedless of warning, and despising GOD, till the judgment of GOD, unable longer to tarry, opens, as we may say, the very

ground under his feet, and he goes down quick into the grave. But GOD, even the GOD Whom by our sins we offend and despise, is very merciful, and His mercy will at times recover the sinner even from the misery which he has despised; and this mercy is set forth to us in the Gospel.

II. We turn our eyes from the party who have come forth from the city, to Him Who comes up to meet them. It is the LORD. He meets this sinner borne along by his own evil lusts and desires. A few minutes later, and all possibility of help would have been gone; for the LORD'S time would have been passed. He would have entered the city, and the procession would have passed to the grave without meeting Him Who alone could restore the dead to life.

So it is with us. We go on in our heedless course of sin. Day after day we travel further and further along the broad road. The Church weeps over us as lost. CHRIST gives us opportunity after opportunity, but we will not hear, till at last it is too late. There is one especial point in all this on which we may keep our eyes. Not only would the saving power of CHRIST have been missed, if the procession had been delayed a few moments later; but, had the bearers been disobedient to the word of the LORD, and continued on their march, despising His gracious act of power, they would have consigned their burden to the earth. Now we have said that these bearers represent unto us our lusts and desires, whereby the soul sunk in mortal sin is carried to its end. How, then, is it with us, if, when the LORD comes near to teach us, we suffer our passions to carry us on still? One man is carried on by his lust for gold, another by his desire for honour. One is en-

grossed by his business; another is so bent on making provision for the life of the body, that the life of the soul is forgotten. It is not only the openly profane and godless who are in the condition of this young man. Many whom the world sees and respects,—the hard-working labourer, the respectable tradesman, the prosperous man of business,—may quite as well answer to this description as the utter reprobate. There is one thing needful, one thing in which the life of our soul consists: if we lose this, all is lost. A man may have passed through the world with no whisper of ill fame against his character, and yet the Church may have to weep over him as a lost son. How many secret, hidden sins are there, which destroy life no less surely than the open and known ones. "Some men's sins go before to judgment, and some they follow after." How fearful is it to hear the self-deceiving sinner, even in the Great Judgment, answer the Judge, "LORD, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?" If even then people will hope thus to escape,—if even then the sins of many must be brought home to them,—surely now it is strange folly to be secure.

Now we still live in these fleshly bodies which press down the soul; the veil of the flesh is still before our eyes, dimming our view of heavenly things; and shall we count ourselves safe, because no great open sin lies at our door? Look, I pray you, at the long list of inward sins which belong to the works of the flesh—jealousy, anger, envy, revenge. How do men tolerate them when they become known! How complacently do we look at them in ourselves while yet the world knows nothing of them! These are the things which

are carrying us away. Borne on by them, we are passing along, heedless of our dear LORD's call, yea, not regarding even His touch. These are the things which must stop at His Presence; and then shall we, obedient to His word, sit up. We shall rise from that death-stupor in which we lie, and CHRIST shall give us life. We shall no longer be borne of them at their will, but shall rise and walk. She, our mother, the holy Church of CHRIST, shall rejoice over us as risen again from the dead; and we, freed from the power of the world and the rule of Satan, shall in her be fitted for our LORD's own glorious Presence.

But let us take heed that we do not go away merely with the empty sounds of these words in our ears. CHRIST is even now calling to us all. There is not one soul among us who does not need, in some way or other, this reviving power of CHRIST. Day by day we need to be renewed. Day by day some new sin appears, or some new act of sin surprises us. Some have need of an entire conversion, an absolute raising again of the dead soul. Others, even while still struggling with sin, are again and again overcome, and so fall—though not, perhaps, to the immediate and entire loss of spiritual life. But whether more or less fallen, the LORD is standing by us now; He is now touching that whereon we lie; He is calling to our evil passions and desires to stay their course. It rests with us to say whether we will hear now, or whether it shall be said of us, "Because I have called, and they would not hear; therefore they shall call, and I will not hear, saith the LORD of Hosts."

A. H. M.

SERMON III.

NAKEDNESS.

GEN. III. 11.

"WHO TOLD THEE THAT THOU WAST NAKED?"

How can the preacher speak worthily of the Paradise of GOD? Human lips cannot do so. And unworthily also must one whose foot has only trodden this fallen and accursed earth speak of "the garden which the LORD GOD planted eastward in Eden, in which He put the man whom He had formed." How shall we speak of the First Great Marriage, at which He, Who blessed the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee by His Divine presence and first miracle, He, the LORD GOD, deigned to act as Priest, when He brought Eve unto the man? Those who in holy matrimony have "called JESUS to their marriage," who have wedded with the blessing of Holy Church, who have the pure mind and the unselfish heart, whose deep affection will not shrink from His eye, Who loves us with a love "passing the love of women,"—they, and only they, have glimpses of the happiness of man and wife before the Fall.

That Fall, alas! soon took place. In the midst of the garden of Eden the LORD GOD made to grow two

trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

I. The Tree of Life had a sacramental virtue in it: it conveyed immortal life, and was also a symbol of it. As the other fruits of the garden had a natural use, namely, the support of the bodies of our first parents, so the fruit of this tree was supernatural, and contained the gift (as I said) of immortal life. This Tree of Life, like the other trees of the garden, was originally intended for the food of man, and had he not fallen he would have "lived for ever," supported by the fruit of the Life-Tree, the divinely appointed means of maintaining man in a blissful and endless existence. But why then did not the LORD GOD give Adam and Eve leave to eat of this blessed fruit at first? Plainly, because the first great parents of our race were in a state of probation, and whilst in that condition were to be supported by the natural produce of the garden. How merciful is GOD! Suppose He had thought proper to have made them immortal by feeding them with those germs of immortality before they fell, who could fathom their misery in such a sore strait! Expelled from Eden, the howling wilderness of a barren earth before them, the load of awful sorrow within their souls, and, if, indeed, forgiven by their Creator, doomed to "a punishment greater than they could bear;" the casket of life emptied of joy, and though by the sweat of the brow the turf might look of a "glad bright green," and the "thorns and thistles" of the curse might be kept out of sight, no resting-place for them beneath the green sod.

You who are young, think I speak a strange language: and yet you will not reach even middle life

without wishing you slept sweetly after life's fitful fever under one of the green mounds in "GOD'S acre." As I look on you, I thank Almighty GOD that Adam did not eat of the Tree of Life, and that we are not doomed to an immortality in "the body of this death." Christian brother, when the hour comes that you feel a longing for rest (and come it will), whether from bitter disappointment, hopeless failure, cruel bodily pain, or utter weariness,—and there is a weariness worse than pain, GOD knoweth,—when, I say, that hour comes, and you feel a yearning for calm, and a wish to throw down the cross Almighty GOD in His wisdom has laid upon you, think on the LORD JESUS and His cross: go bravely on in His strength, you cannot in your own, and He will in His own good time "give His beloved sleep." Yes:

> "It will come by and by, and all day long
> In that old quiet house I told you of:
> We'll sleep safe there."

And as you have fallen asleep in JESUS, you will indeed find with the Psalmist that "joy cometh in the morning." Well for us that Paradise was lost, whilst the Tree of Life was yet untasted.

II. Let us now direct our attention to the other tree which grew beside the Tree of Life, namely, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We have seen that the Tree of Life was a Sacrament. The Tree of Knowledge had no sacramental use, no permitted natural use. Its disuse was its use. It was a test of obedience, an instrument of probation.

Had our first parents not eaten of the one, in due time leave would have been given to have partaken of the other. But they failed in their period of trial. The devil tempted the woman and she fell: the woman

tempted her husband and he fell. The instant the forbidden fruit was eaten, we read that "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Those perfect limbs and that glorious beauty of theirs, shivered, grew gaunt, haggard, and puckered up in the icy breath of the great Creator's wrath. The sin was committed: conscience awoke. Wise would ye be beyond what the LORD GOD made you? Your eyes are opened, and *that* not by eating of the forbidden fruit, for the devil was a liar "from the beginning," in attributing miraculous powers to the tree, which was simply a test of obedience, but by the terrors of the LORD and an awakened conscience: so they who a brief space before were both naked and were not ashamed, now cower "stripped and naked" in the glaring sunlight of outraged day.

Such is always the effect of deadly sin on a person previously in a state of grace (the Apostle, you know, tells us that there is such a thing as falling away from grace):[1] the very instant after the sin is committed, a man's eyes are opened, and he knows that he is naked, separated from his Creator, and obnoxious to Almighty wrath.

The first thing that Adam and Eve attempt to do is to extricate themselves, in some degree at least, by the light of natural reason from the unhappy effects resulting from the exercise of their "private judgment." So they clothe themselves, as best they may, with the leaves of trees. But when they heard "the voice of the LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day," the consciousness of their great guilt and of their naked state (for the leaves of the trees made but a sorry

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

covering), was so intense, that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the Presence of the LORD GOD amongst the trees of the garden. And," so continues the inspired page, "the LORD GOD called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman, whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD GOD said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The Serpent tempted me, and I did eat."

Then followed the curse upon the serpent, and the first prophecy. For He, the LORD GOD, announced in mystic promise how that He, the Word, would be made flesh, and the seed of the woman should in the after-time bruise the serpent's head. Then came the judicial sentence on the woman, on the man, and on the earth; and the long black shadow of the curse lay, with a darkness that might be felt, on all creation, that last evening in Paradise.

But oh! the pity of our GOD! He will not have the accursed culprits shivering in nakedness, like aspen trees, in the gloom and stillness of that tremendous doom. Therefore "unto Adam also, and to his wife did the LORD GOD make coats of skins, and clothed them." And this was to teach them, not only that the LORD GOD still cared for them, but that He alone could blot out their transgressions, be "a hiding-place" for them in their trouble, and could "cover the naked with a garment." Furthermore, observe how significantly

this clothing of Adam and Eve with skins pointed out in type and parable the great remedy for sin. As soon as the promise of eventual mercy had been disclosed, the LORD GOD clothes them with the skins of slaughtered animals; the blood of a victim is shed, that the nakedness of Adam and Eve may be covered: thus teaching "from the beginning" that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." You see, that for the bodies of Adam and Eve Almighty GOD alone could devise a perfect and valid covering, and that "not without blood;" and that by so clothing their physical nakedness, He sets upon them a gracious token that He alone could hide guilt from Himself. Yes: it was the finger of GOD the SON pointing from the beginning to the remedy for sin, even to His own great Sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary.

So with the Curse, and also with the Tokens of reconciliation upon them, Adam and his wife are "sent forth from the Garden of Eden." Those sin-polluted hands may not be put forth to take also of the Tree of Life. And yet the LORD GOD, Who then drove them from Paradise, Whose "flaming sword, which turned every way," sentinelled in mercy as well as in wrath "the way of the Tree of Life," deigned in "the fulness of time" to be "made of a woman," to suffer the pains of infancy, to have in manhood His blessed visage marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, and to offer Himself up upon the Altar of the Cross as the Great Atonement and Oblation for the sins of the whole world,—to pray, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"—to say, "It is finished," ere He bowed His head and gave up the ghost,—deigned when He rose from the dead to say to a son of Adam,

a "weak brother," "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing,"—deigns to permit us, who have "put on CHRIST" in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, to reach hither our hand and touch the LORD GOD under the form of bread and wine in the Holy Communion, "to eat and live for ever," for "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The first prophecy was fulfilled when the LORD JESUS CHRIST "suffered death upon the Cross for our redemption, and made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

After He was risen from the dead, He proceeded, during the forty days before His Ascension into heaven, to lay out the garden of His kingdom, the new Eden of His Church, His Paradise regained. He then ascended into heaven, to send the Comforter, GOD the HOLY GHOST. And on the day of Pentecost, according to His promise, the Spirit of GOD brooded over the new creation; and the Second Adam, though sitting in glory at the right hand of GOD the FATHER, still moves over the lawns of the Second Eden in a mystery, and "in another form." May our eyes never be "holden that we should not know Him," from want of faith! For there is a woe denounced on those who do "not discern the LORD'S Body."

Brethren in the faith, our state in the new Eden is similar to that of our first parents in the ancient Eden. We have been recreated in the image of GOD, "having put on the new man," the LORD GOD not having clothed

us with the skins of slaughtered animals, but mystically with Himself, and having made us temples of the HOLY GHOST.

Again: the Word, Who made the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, (for "all things were made by Him,") and ordained it as a test of obedience, has left His light in the lantern of His Church for us to walk by; as says the Psalmist, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgments." Thus GOD'S written Word, under the wardenship of His Church, is the test of our obedience: so far antitype answers type. But is the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden? *That* is "in the Paradise of GOD;" and in its place towers the Tree of the Cross, from which, with outstretched hands, the LORD JESUS feeds us with "the Bread of GOD."

Beloved, as obedience to Almighty GOD was the tenure on which the Garden of Eden was held, so is it now. You are baptized, and have, therefore, "put on CHRIST." You have received Him under your roof, your body, the temple of the HOLY GHOST, in the Holy Eucharist. But have you obeyed, or disobeyed Him? If the latter, you are *not* clothed, but naked and shivering in the blast of Almighty wrath.

Oh! think of some wilful, deadly sin you have at some time unhappily committed. Perhaps you have repented of it, sought forgiveness, "shown yourself to the Priest," and found it. Be it so: GOD grant it! But the instant you so sinned, I know you felt yourself not clothed with CHRIST, but *naked*. You thought of the awful doom of the man who had not on a wedding garment. What if CHRIST should come into this church

this very evening, and you should be found naked! Hark! There is a knock at the gates—a knock at the weed-grown door of your heart! "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" It is the voice of the LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day. It is the cool of the day—the evening, the resurrection morning is not yet come; so it is not the Judge before the door. Man! man! fling it open while yet you may; while the time for repentance still lingers. The door opens with a heart-broken "GOD be merciful to me a sinner!" and there is revealed, not simply the Man of Sorrows, but the Church's Head,—the Son of Man, with the priestly vestment and the glorious apparel, the jewelled crown upon His forehead, the Light in one hand, the other on the sinner's heart,—and the waters of penitence gush forth. See! He clothes the returning prodigal with white raiment. He "sups with him." Oh! he will yet overcome, that poor penitent, and eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of GOD.

Beloved brethren in the faith! Though we are in the Eden of the Church, I would have you remember that the branches of the forest of this world overhang it, and they bear forbidden fruit; eat it, and that instant you will know that you are naked. The flood[1] is coming; hear ye not the sound of rain afar off, the rain of fire that will be? and the ark has no unrobed guest! "GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way that ye may be able to bear it." And again: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that

[1] This sermon was preached after evensong on Sexagesima Sunday.

watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." So, when the hem of the white wedding garment floats over the threshold of the ark, you shall have rest, and perfect peace; for the LORD will shut you in.

But, mark me! If the LORD is ever to shut His door upon you, giving you entrance into the azure, many-mansioned Home, you must open *your* door to Him when He knocks, and says, as He walks in His garden in the cool of the day, "Where art thou?" (you too are afraid because you are naked) "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Even so. Forbidden fruit—and the Lost Garment. Shut not your ear to His voice, dear brother; for though you are afraid because you are naked and would hide yourself, yet still the awful and loving Questioner —awful, for is He not Priest, King, and Judge that will be?—loving, for the blessed Brow yet bears the thorn mark, and the sceptred Hand yet shows the print of the nails—stands at the door and knocks,—"If any man hear My Voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me." Yes, O man! the LORD JESUS knocks at the door of your heart, and deigns to ask admittance. He cannot, as of old, pass through the barred portals, "because of your unbelief." When He did *that* mighty work, there was but one sceptic in a believing company. You must with your own hand throw wide open the gates for the King. You too may reach hither your hand and touch your LORD and your GOD, as He comes to you "in another form" in the miracle of the Holy Eucharist; so shall you "put forth your hand and take also of the Tree of

Life," which groweth in the Paradise of GOD, and live for ever in the golden metropolis of Heaven.

Finally: the Church of GOD may be found naked, as well as any one of the faithful. CHRIST visits the one, as well as the other. There is something very awful in CHRIST finding "His Body" naked, sick, or in prison. There is, moreover, a terrible woe denounced on those who neglect Him in His members. What then must be the doom of those who strip His "body" of raiment, load it with manacles, make the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint? "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Regard, I pray you, the Church of GOD in this land. A hundred years ago, what the LORD JESUS once said to a Christian Bishop, but for His long-suffering, He might have said to her, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." Rarely, in those evil days, was the Holy Sacrifice offered up; rarely was the Sacrament of Holy Baptism ministered. The Second Person of the Ever-blessed TRINITY was driven from His own Altar. The Third Person of the Ever-blessed TRINITY was banished from the Font; for there were no waters for Him to move over. In the pulpit the moral exhortation and dilettante essay substituted pompous commonplace and elegant verbiage for the heart-stirring message of the Gospel. Faith was dead. Verily, inwardly there was as surely spiritual death, as outwardly there was symbolized "Nakedness" in the unlighted Altar and the unstoled Priest.

Then it was that CHRIST stood and knocked at the closed weed-grown door of His Church, and told her she was naked. Then like a sharp cry of pain rang the message

of Repentance and Faith. The Comforter breathed upon the dry bones at that First Revival, and they lived and stood upon their feet an exceeding great army. The Church was awake, but she was not yet "clothed and in her right mind." And the world *knows* she is awake —the Herod, the Pilate, and the Gallio of the day know it; and a rabble, Priest and Magistrate "consenting," outrage with drunken blasphemy the courts of the Most Highest, and insult His Messenger with the Gospel message on his lips.[1]

The storm passes, and there is a great calm. In due time CHRIST visits His Church again. Then came the Second Revival—the preacher in the wilderness must now do more than preach repentance. The faithful are now too strong for milk—the brows sparkling with the jewelled cross of baptismal dew, may wear the pearl coronet of the Gospel. So rather more than a quarter of a century ago, the Catholic faith was once more faithfully preached and the Gospel message received with gladness. The dry bones are first recalled to life, and there is joy among the angels of GOD. Next comes the solemn question—for the Bride was not clothed with "vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours,"—Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And verily it was so. For "spiritual experiences" and a mystical state of mind had been substituted in the First Revival for the grand Sacramental system of the Gospel.

"The faith which was once delivered to the saints" is

[1] The riots in the church of the Holy Trinity, Cambridge, at the close of the last century. The reader is referred to Carus' Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon.

again preached in all its Scriptural fulness, nought is added to it, nought is taken from it.

The Two Great Sacraments are "rightly and duly" administered. The Penitent "shows himself to the Priest" and the Leper is cleansed in the Lesser Sacrament of penance.

The sick are prayed over by the elders of the Church and anointed with oil in the Name of the LORD;[1] for the Church dare not "bracket" the written word of GOD; nay, rather, she joys that the faithful should have the full benefit of that "open" Volume.

The lighted and vested Altar proclaims that the "right faith" is held; the black penitential stole no longer shows the Priest to be executing his office in the sackcloth and ashes of humiliation, insulting at once CHRIST and His members; but his "change of raiment," his priestly vestment and glorious apparel, proclaim that "in the person of CHRIST" he is performing Divine Service, offering up the Holy Sacrifice, the Christian Oblation; knowing that the Offering below is one with that above.

And hark! No longer the maniac's cry of pain on coming to herself, but the old glorious music of the Church, clothed and in her right mind, and sitting at the feet of JESUS.

And the world *knows* it—the Herod, the Pilate, and the Gallio of the day know it—and a godless and fiendish rabble hounded on by Priest and Magistrate outrage with drunken blasphemy the courts of the Most Highest and insult His messengers with the Gospel message on their lips.[2]

[1] S. James v. 14, 15.

[2] The riots in S. George's-in-the-East parish church are, of course, here indicated.

The same law obtains as in individuals so in Churches. As surely as, when we are converted and would strengthen our brethren,[1] we find even those of our own household our enemies; so surely when the Church lays aside the "filthy garments" of unbelief, sloth, and worldliness, and goes forth with the Gospel lamp in one hand and the keys of power in the other, "glorious in her apparel and travelling in the greatness of her strength," will the "Art thou come to torment us?" of a devil-possessed world, like the howl of a wild beast, offend her ears. She will reply, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and will go on her stately way blessing and converting, with the grand chant and anthem on her lips, bearing the Lamp of the Word and the blessed Sacraments, conquering and triumphant, for no weapon forged against her shall prosper.

The LORD GOD is walking in His garden in the cool of the day. He comes to branches of His Church; He comes to individual members of it. And He will come, not as Priest but as Judge. But He has not yet so come, because the last sands of the "accepted time" have not run out of Time's gigantic hour-glass.

Therefore the solemn question may still be asked, if you are shunning His eye because you are naked—*Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* Is it so, my brother?

Then I have a message from GOD for thee—"Go and sin no more."

J. P.

N.B.—It may be proper to add that the idea, and, in some sort, the treatment, of this Sermon was suggested by the study of Mr. Holman Hunt's profoundly religious picture of the "Light of the Word."

[1] S. Luke xxii. 32.

SERMON IV.

THE EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.[1]

S. LUKE XVII. 20, 21.

"AND WHEN HE WAS DEMANDED OF THE PHARISEES WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME, HE ANSWERED THEM AND SAID, THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION. NEITHER SHALL THEY SAY, LO HERE, OR LO THERE; FOR BEHOLD, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU."

THE figure of a kingdom is more frequently employed than any other in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to denote the character of the Gospel dispensation, whether it be regarded as an outward system, or as an inward and spiritual power.

CHRIST Himself, invariably almost, describes that dispensation by the terms, "the Kingdom of GOD" and "the Kingdom of Heaven."

Similarly, the writings of the Prophets abound in allusions to the Messiah as a King, and to His dominions as a kingdom.

And when the Baptist came to prepare CHRIST'S way before Him, he preached, saying, "The kingdom of Heaven is at Hand."

Ever since the Fall, that Evil Spirit, who is empha-

[1] Preached on behalf of the S. P. G.

tically called "the prince of this world," has ruled with tyrant sway over the vast majority of mankind. Wherever man's foot has trod, there we may be sure of tracing signs innumerable of the most abject homage rendered to this dread king. In every nation can he reckon on thousands ever ready to do his bidding, yea, for love of his service to rush on death, and that eternal death.

From such infatuated submission to the tyranny of the evil one, CHRIST came to set us free. He as man came to found a Kingdom upon earth, in opposition to the kingdom of Satan. Yes—oh wondrous mystery!—He vouchsafed to enter the world as a rival King to him whom He created and could annihilate in a moment.

And how did He manifest Himself? Was His coming, as we might have fancied, in accordance with those words of the Psalmist, "The earth trembled and quaked, the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed because He was wroth; there went a smoke out in His Presence, and a consuming fire out of His Mouth, so that coals were kindled at it. He bowed the heavens also and came down, and it was dark under His Feet. He rode upon the cherubims and did fly; He came flying upon the wings of the wind?"

No. Not thus would He come. Not as GOD but as Man was He to lay the foundations of His earthly kingdom. And so as Man He entered the world, the Representative of that human nature, which, having been enslaved in Adam, should in Him be set free.

His kingdom, moreover, was not to be established in the world by irresistible compulsion from without, but by the gentle and gradual subjugation of man's whole inward being. Man had, of his own free will, fallen

from GOD, and so, of his own free will, must he return to Him again.

When, therefore, the SON of GOD was born of a human Mother, He came not "with observation." That the CHRIST was born, that the King of Heaven had come to take unto Himself an earthly kingdom, was revealed to but a very few, even in the country of His birth. And then for thirty years little or nothing was heard of Him. He went down to Nazareth, we are told, with Mary His Virgin Mother, and with Joseph, and "was subject unto them." And there He remained, in that village home, waiting His FATHER'S summons to commence the work which He had given Him to do.

And when that summons came, we find Him the same meek and lowly Being still. A King indeed He ever was, by virtue of the inherent power of His Godhead; and a King He claimed to be considered by manifestations of that power; but He so regulated those manifestations as not to supersede on the part of man the exercise of his judgment and free will.

CHRIST, we know, ever warned all, who, moved perhaps by some sudden impulse, declared their readiness to become subjects of His kingdom, of the trials and sufferings that awaited them. He told them plainly that they would have to endure persecutions and even death for His sake. And this doubtless deterred many from giving themselves up to His service. But had this been all; could the future glories of CHRIST'S heavenly kingdom have been purchased by a few sharp pangs, yea, by a whole life of bodily suffering, CHRIST'S kingdom on earth, the necessary precursor of His kingdom in heaven, would have spread more rapidly than it did.

No: the offence lay not here, but in this, that the kingdom of GOD, the kingdom of purity and peace, must be within all those who would hail CHRIST as their LORD and King. This must be the first stage in the coming of His kingdom. If, He told them, they would be His subjects, they would have to mortify their corrupt affections, to become as little children; to believe, without always understanding; to obey, without always seeing the reason for obedience; to forgive the unforgiving; to love the unloving; to deny self; to be meek, and gentle, and pure, and true. And this most of our LORD'S hearers shrank from, as from a state of life all too high for them. They were, doubtless, many of them, ready to face any enemy but those within them; to suffer any pain, but that of self-mortification; to endure any hardship but that of the daily carrying of the cross. And so they could not be His disciples, could not be subjects of Him Who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." It was of no use their following Him, and calling Him LORD, LORD, so long as they knowingly and wilfully harboured His enemies within their heart; so long as they shrank from coping with them, from making any effort to drive them out.

Hence it was, that the kingdom of GOD, at its origin, was so small, and attracted so little notice.

And even when CHRIST, having won His final victory over Satan, had ascended into Heaven, and had sent down on His Apostles the gift of the HOLY GHOST, and, in consequence, believers were the more added unto the LORD, yet the work of subjugation was inward and imperceptible. With a solemn stillness did the kingdom grow. Ever and anon indeed, its steady and mysterious progress seemed to startle its enemies

into bitter, furious opposition. But such opposition served only to call forth into greater prominence and activity that inward spiritual power, which had made CHRIST'S kingdom what it was. The fire of persecution made the weapons of the Christian soldier to glitter with a radiance which was not of this earth. Then it was that Christian love met with hatred, such as it alone could and did overcome; that Christian faith being most sorely tried, gained its most signal triumphs; that Christian hope illumined the darkness even of that sad time with light drawn by anticipation from the perfect day of heaven. And thus it came to pass that in the hour of its fancied victory, the proud and scoffing world was fain to own the supremacy of the rule of CHRIST; and, by force of its inner life, the sect, which once had been everywhere spoken against, developed into a mighty power spreading northward and southward and eastward and westward.

But although the weapons of CHRIST'S warfare were not carnal,—although He won men over from the kingdom of Satan by the gentle allurements of the HOLY SPIRIT, working in their hearts and renewing their whole nature,—yet still His kingdom, into which they were received in Holy Baptism, partook of the character of earthly kingdoms in its outward organisation. It had its rulers to govern it, and extend its dominion; it had its form of sound words, by which, as by a separate tongue, its subjects were distinguished from the unbelieving world; it had its Sacraments, to convey and renew the gift of the New Life, springing from its King, the Second Adam; and it had, moreover, certain laws and ordinances, for the sake of preserving due order and discipline among its members.

And thus the kingdom of GOD was within men, regarded not only as a power working in the individual heart, but as an outward, visible system, instinct with this individual life, growing and spreading within the dominions of the prince of the powers of darkness. And this system, this kingdom, the Church, was for a time,—the time of its greatest purity and prosperity,—one; one in faith, in hope, in love; and one, too, in external unity. And in that unity, under GOD, lay the secret of its strength. But in time, as we all know to our sorrow, divisions and dissensions arose among those who, as Christians, should have loved as brethren; should have been pitiful, courteous; who should have kept "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And then, as a necessary consequence, the external fabric of CHRIST'S kingdom was broken up by these internal dissensions; and from that time to this the kingdom of our LORD has been divided against itself.

The Anglican, Roman, and Eastern divisions of that kingdom are now (and alas! with what bitter heart-burnings one against another!) fighting separately, and therefore but feebly, for their common LORD and King, instead of as of yore, and as they might now be doing, compelling the enemies of the Cross to come in and join their ranks, by the simple might of unity and love.

But, brethren, while we, as true Catholics, deplore the present loss of unity in the Church of CHRIST, most ungrateful should we be were we unmindful of GOD'S goodness to us, in enabling us to retain, in its original integrity of doctrine and order, of spirit and form, that portion of CHRIST'S kingdom which was established here in Apostolic times, if not by Apostolic hands.

And who will be bold enough to deny that England has been allowed to extend her sway over heathen countries, because the kingdom of GOD is *thus* within her? For what, brethren, are the kingdoms of the world, engaged as they are each in advancing its own temporal interests, and guided in their furtherance but too often by no higher principle than political expediency? What are they, in their rise and fall, in their wars and contentions, in the ambition of their rulers, in the madness of their people, but so many instruments in the hand of the King of kings to work out the accomplishment of His eternal, immutable designs with regard to *His* kingdom.

Connecting, then, as we must, the fate of earthly kingdoms with the extension of the kingdom of CHRIST, we cannot but be convinced of the mighty influence that England seems intended by the ALMIGHTY to exercise on the present, and (if she be but mindful of her glorious destiny) the future condition of that kingdom.

The colonies which she has been permitted to plant in all quarters of the globe afford her a vantage ground not possessed by any other nation. And, thank GOD! of late years this vantage ground has been occupied in the way in which it ought always to have been occupied, viz., by the reproduction, in those lands which acknowledge our rule, of the kingdom of GOD as it exists within us here. Our eyes are now open to the necessity of spreading CHRIST'S kingdom, in His own way; of presenting Christianity to the heathen, not only as a spiritual influence on the heart, but as that influence incorporated in a living system.

Thankful indeed should we be for what has been done already, in the increase of our colonial episcopate; and

thankful should we be for the corresponding extension of the kingdom of CHRIST, by which that increase has been marked. But the work, England's work, in this particular, is far, very far from complete yet. Many are the barren places which the Church would fain see occupied, each by its own branch of the kingdom of GOD. Had she only the means of planting new dioceses where they are now so sorely needed,—in India, for example,—and of strengthening the hands of those already at work among the heathen, what an ingathering into the kingdom of CHRIST might we not look for! Yea, did England in this way act worthily of her proud position among the nations of the earth, she would do much towards regaining the lost unity of the Church Catholic. She, at least, might send her Bishops and Priests, all speaking the *same thing*, professing the *one* faith, and adding to the *one* Church all who believed and were baptized.

This England might do. And why, then, does she not do it? What is it that hinders Church extension among the heathen? Is it not a great and prevalent disregard amongst us of the truth of our SAVIOUR'S words, as applied to ourselves, "The kingdom of GOD is within you?" May it not be that CHRIST'S kingdom does not, through our instrumentality, spread more rapidly and take deeper root in heathen countries, mainly because we do not recognise and value the blessing of its presence *within us* or *among us* here? Is it not the truth that the essential identity of the Church in England with that kingdom founded by CHRIST, the government of which He committed to His Apostles, and to their successors for ever, is, by the majority of this nation, either wilfully ignored, or at best deemed a

matter of no moment? And what is the consequence? Why, that much of the missionary zeal among us is misdirected; contributions of money flowing from all quarters into one or other of the many societies, representing that vague, undefined, unscriptural Christianity, which, because it rises superior to Apostolic order and discipline, is by many deemed exclusively spiritual.

Men, good men, zealous men, are sent out by these societies to preach the Gospel; and in many cases they do the work appointed them well and efficiently. They make converts. They teach the untutored savage, or—but less frequently—the subtle Brahmin, to bow with heartfelt adoration before the throne of the Triune GOD; but there their work stops. They have, by GOD'S blessing resting on their labours, rescued an erring sheep; but where is the fold, the visible fold of CHRIST'S Church, wherein he may realise, not only by the inward apprehension of faith, but by an outward communion and fellowship, his union with CHRIST, and through Him with all the members of His mystical body, the Church? And needs he not this? Oh! surely the heathen converts, in their ofttimes lonely condition, isolated from all they once held dear, need, sorely need an outward system, wherein they may be received; they need the loving helps, the gentle sympathy, the soothing ministry, the strengthening graces, which are to be found, at least in their perfection, in the Church, and in the Church alone.

Moreover, we can hardly expect any *lasting* success from those missions which work independently of the Church. Even if the seed which is sown in the hearts of individuals brings forth good fruit, there can be no certainty that the harvest will be permanent, or that

the seed of such fruit will in its turn sink into the hearts of others: whereas a *Church*, once planted, need never die. It has life in itself, derived from Him Who is Life, and Whose body it is; life which is capable of being ever transmitted through divinely-appointed channels; so that it can not only put forth new *branches*, but may *root* itself, again and again, in all directions, Christian love being the sole measure of its quickening powers.

Is it wise, then, is it right, to labour even for CHRIST, save in conjunction with the kingdom which He founded? If one way be more excellent than another,—if, as we believe, the Christian religion can be more effectually and permanently imparted through the instrumentality of the Catholic Church than by any other means, it behoves us to do our utmost to establish this truth; to make the Church more universally recognised as the divinely-appointed instrument of knitting men through CHRIST to GOD. Yea, if ever, like the Pharisees in the text, we ask, impatiently perhaps, when the kingdom of GOD will come,—when CHRIST shall be acknowledged as King by those nations who are now sitting in heathen darkness,—let us take to ourselves the rebuke implied in our LORD'S answer, and, remembering that the kingdom of GOD is *within* us, do our best, by the due employment of the means of grace which it has in charge, to advance the inward power of that kingdom in our own hearts, and likewise to extend its influence among those who, though professedly its subjects, are strangers to the blessings which, as subjects, are theirs. And each of us may do somewhat in this good and great work. We may each of us endeavour to acquire from books, or from those who are set over us in the LORD, our pastors

and teachers, a clear understanding of the privileges of Church membership, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of others; for this must follow, an earnest desire to hasten the coming of CHRIST's kingdom among those nations who as yet know Him not. Let us, then, do what we can, each in his own sphere, to further the spread of Church principles; and that not because they are the principles of a certain set of men, but simply and solely because the more generally and clearly they are received, the more widely will CHRIST's dominion extend. Let us love the national Church and labour for it, because it spreads the religion which CHRIST founded, the Apostles guarded, and by which the saints in all ages have lived.

J. L. L.

All reference to the special work of the S. P. G. has been omitted.

SERMON V.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE VIRGIN-MOTHER.

S. Luke ii. 22.

"And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord."

On the Feast of the Circumcision the Church celebrates the event recorded in the verse which immediately precedes the text—the first act of her Divine Lord's obedience to the law for man's sake, the first shedding of His precious Blood, in the rite of circumcision. To-day she commemorates His presentation in the Temple "in substance of our flesh," in obedience still to the same law; for "it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord."

And while He, for man's sake, and for that alone, was thus obedient to the law, there is one associated with Him in His obedience, who with Him might have claimed exemption, but who like Him obeyed, and the days of the Virgin-Mother's purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished. And so it was meet that the Mother should be commemorated with

the SON to-day, that a twofold act of obedience might edify the Church of the Incarnate, the Mother united with the SON, the creature with the Creator, in an act of obedience which was among the firstfruits of the "taking of the Manhood into GOD."

The Eternal Word, the Only-Begotten of the FATHER, conceived by the HOLY GHOST and born in time of a Virgin-Mother, obeyed, and in obeying taught the exaltation of the humble and the true value and dignity of obedience. It was as Man that He was able thus to obey the law for man's sake. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so only could it be by the obedience of One that many could be made righteous. And who could render this obedience but "the Man CHRIST JESUS," that as in Adam all had died, so in Him the CHRIST, the Second Adam, and through His obedience, they should be made alive again and walk in newness of life? But with His act of obedience His Mother and her obedience to the same law are intimately bound up, and they are together commemorated to-day. If we think of the Child presented in the Temple as on this day, we think also of her who gave her First-Born to the LORD; if we think of Him the sinless One, Very and Eternal GOD, King of kings and LORD of lords, obedient nevertheless to the law for the sake of sinful man, so our thoughts cannot but pass on to her the mortal Mother, thus early united with the Eternal Child in acts of humility and holy obedience. The Ever-Virgin Mother of GOD Incarnate, in accomplishing the days of her purification, in obedience to the law of Moses, gave, as it were, the key-note of all her future life. He, by His obedience, satisfied for man's past disobedience, and rendered his future obedience a

possible and an acceptable offering to GOD: she, by her obedience, at once proved its possibility and illustrated its exalting power; to whom all the daughters of Israel henceforth should look as their model of humility and obedience—nay, all the sons and daughters of the Israel of GOD, the generations of the countless subjects of the everlasting Kingdom of her SON, who, as they ceased not to sing her blessedness, should for ever imitate her virtue.

Now the very root and essence of all sanctity consists in conformity with the will of GOD, and obedience to His Law as setting forth that will in relation to us. Perfect holiness is perfect uniformity with the will of the All-Holy GOD. Is such holiness as this, it may be asked, possible, is it attainable by man? Our own experience, our sense of weakness, our judgment as to the probable future, grounded upon our knowledge of the well-remembered past—all these would lead us to answer, "It is *not*." But dare we answer so in the face of the command of our Divine LORD, "Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect?" Did He command what could not be fulfilled? Nay, did He set an example of godly life which man should be powerless to imitate? Was the result of example and command alike to be a *necessarily* unsuccessful attempt on man's part to fulfil an obligation laid upon him by One infinite in wisdom as in power and love? Surely this could not be. Truly perfect obedience never had been rendered to the will and law of GOD since Adam fell; sin had reigned with iron sceptre, and man had no power of his own to arise and free himself from the dire bondage in which he lay. But this was only for a time; and the fondly-cherished hope of the faithful was

realized when, as on this day, the Word Incarnate, the Messenger of the Covenant, suddenly came to His Temple. Now at least was the perfect obedience rendered, that through the obedience of One many should indeed be made righteous. Here was a human will, the will of "the Man CHRIST JESUS," that never swerved from its allegiance to the will of GOD. The perfect holiness of the Word made flesh involved the unwavering uniformity of His human will with the will of GOD Most Holy; in this lay the perfection of His holiness and the efficacy of His obedience. He, then, the Word Incarnate, is man's only perfect model of holiness. The brightness of His Soul was never tarnished nor sullied by the breath of sin, and its unutterable tranquillity was unruffled by the storm-blast of temptation which rolled over its surface. The perfect uniformity of His human will with the will of the FATHER never knew variableness nor the shadow of turning. Nor was it in vain that the Perfect Example of godly life was shown forth before men. The world truly knew Him not, and "His own," to whom He came, "received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD." To these it was given to receive, and bear again in the world's despite, the Image of GOD which sin had defaced, and as grace grew and was strong within them, the wills of countless sons were conformed with more or less fidelity to the will of their common FATHER. He Who gave the example gave also the power to follow it, and the unbroken line of Saints witnesses in every land and to

every generation that He gave it not in vain. Let us receive their witness as we see the wonders of Divine grace reflected in their splendours; while the perfections even of the Saints must still not be taken as the limit of the possibilities of grace. Far less should our own miserable failures suggest a disbelief in the successes of others, or our own poor attainments supply the measure of possible sanctity.

Likeness to JESUS inwrought by grace is the one beauty of the soul; and herein lay the whole beauty of the Virgin-Mother—that in her the likeness of her SON was so sweetly reproduced, as her calm and placid spirit mirrored back the brightness of His shining. It was in that she was like Him that she was beautiful indeed. And in this her likeness it is given us to share if we too reflect His shining in our souls. There is truly (and that we can never forget) her own special incommunicable dignity as Mother of the Divine Child, but it is not in *this* that her *chief* blessedness lies, surpassingly magnificent as it is; for when a certain woman lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked, He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of GOD, and keep it. In this was the Mother blessed of the SON. And even as we find her in the Gospel, the same is she in the mind and heart of the faithful; the "blessed" of Gabriel and of Elizabeth is the everlastingly "blessed" of the Church; but "more blessed in that she heard the word and kept it, than that hers was the womb that bare Him."[1]

Nor can we wonder at the place she occupies in the hierarchy of the saints when we consider her, first, as

[1] Bp. Forbes.

the chosen of GOD out of the daughters of His people to be the Mother of the Eternal SON; and when we think, further, of the opportunities of holiness which were hers from the time that she first worshipped before the manger of Bethlehem till she stood with the sword of Simeon's prophecy piercing her heart's core—the afflicted Mother beneath the Cross of her SON. We cannot wonder or feel surprised at the gifts and graces which were hers, when we call to mind the years of holy happy intercourse which were given her to hold with her wondrous SON, while the deep tenderness and yearning self-forgetting love of the Mother for the Child were so marvellously blended and united with the high and pure devotion of the Saint to her GOD. Not that those years were as one long dream of earthly joy and love, however holy, however pure,—one long day of cloudless sunshine and unchanging brightness; far, far from this: such is not the atmosphere in which saints are wont to live and grow; they who would so conceive of the holy home of Nazareth and of the inner life of that blessed Mother can know little of GOD'S dealing with His Saints, and have missed the true character of that Mother. Beneath the shadow of the Cross have the Saints grown up, by the way of suffering they passed to their reward, bearing in their body the marks of the LORD JESUS. The way of the Cross is the one path of the Saints. And the Mother of the Crucified was not either to seek or to receive exemption from this common law of suffering. They who are to be high in glory hereafter must sink here in the deep waters of affliction and the waves and storms pass over them; while their LORD sitteth above the waterfloods, remaining a King for ever; and He is never hidden from their faith. What, then,

was the sorrow that could temper the joy of that holy home—the cloud that could cross the brightness of its morning? It was nothing less than the shadow of the Cross which as on this day the holy Simeon, mingling words of prophecy and of blessing, cast over the whole future life of the Mother of his LORD. "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." And can we doubt that she who kept the things she heard and pondered them in her heart, took *these* words to her heart, and pondered them in her peaceful home beside the cradle of her Child? Doubtless she did so, and as she pondered, the depth of their meaning was at least so far opened up as to cast the shadow of the Cross over that Mother's life, and to make the home of Nazareth, outwardly so calm, a very crucible of sanctifying pain. The future doubtless was indistinct to her, and the sorrow that was coming loomed in the distance mingling its dark shadow strangely with the brightness of the present joy. But does the indistinctness of some trial which is surely coming diminish the anxiety with which we await its approach? Surely not. It is the vague imperfect apprehension of some mighty grief which we know is coming that is so specially trying to our calmness. To await the Cross with calmness is oftentimes harder than to bear it with resignation. And if it is so when the coming sorrow is to be all our own, how must the anxiety be intensified a thousand-fold when the suffering is to be cast on another, and that one loved with all the burning love of a mother's heart,

while her own cross is but to sympathize with her suffering child! But it was more than mere motherly love that warmed the heart of this mother—it was no common child that asked her sympathy; and as she obeyed the law and made her wondrous offering, it was in no ignorant simplicity that she presented her gift to the LORD. She had pondered much, and wonder and mystery seemed to be gathering ever more and more around her Child. But these were early days as yet, and the mighty mystery into which the angels desire to look could only have been accepted as such by her faith, to grow with the growing years, sinking ever deeper into her soul. Thus does she stand before us to-day, the Maiden-Mother of the Purification; we have looked into the future but to gather explanation of the present, and we must leave her beautiful in the first bright rays of the rising Sun of Righteousness—in the morning of her life, amid the earliest shining of the day-spring from on high.

We see in her an example (next to that of the LORD Himself) dearest of all to the hearts of CHRIST'S people. Let us strive, like her, to keep all these things and ponder them in our hearts,—keep the bright vision of her purity, the heavenly beauty of her character, to be ever to us an attraction to what is pure and lovely and of good report. And specially should the mothers and daughters and sisters of Christian lands keep her always in their hearts and in their homes, to be an ever-present model to them, to point them to the true sphere of that wonderful power for good which GOD has given them, and to show them the mode of its exercise; to remind them of the blessing they may be to those who are their nearest and their dearest; how

by making homes *happy* they may oftentimes make them *holy*, not by banishing suffering and sorrow, (for that cannot be) but by bearing it themselves with calm resignation, and softening it to others by the offering of a ready and a hearty sympathy. And as the holy home of Nazareth is recognized as the model and the type of all Christian homes, so will they become more and more true earthly ante-chambers of the one heavenly home of the faithful; and when the alternating joys and sorrows of earthly families shall be over, when joys and griefs shared together are passed, and mingled tears for ever wiped away, they shall enter into the common joy of the one family above, in the presence of their one heavenly FATHER, GOD blessed for evermore.

J. E.

SERMON VI.

THE TEACHING OF PENTECOST.[1]

Acts ii. 1—4.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come." Mark this word *fully*, brethren. Ten days ago our Blessed Lord went up into heaven. He ascended after having repeatedly promised to send down the Holy Spirit upon His disciples. He left them with this distinct assurance, that through His departure the Comforter would come to them. But ten days had passed, and the promise still remained unfulfilled. Day after day they waited, and yet He came not. Had our Lord's Word, then, proved untrue? No. He only waited till the *full* time, which He had determined, should arrive. When the day of Pentecost was *fully* come, then was the promise made good. And what were the Apostles doing in the mean while? They did not give up heart

[1] A Sermon for Whitsun-Day.

because their expectation was not fulfilled at once? No. They continued earnest in prayer—praying for that great gift which they felt persuaded would be given in due time, and perhaps by their prayers be hastened. And should not this, beloved, teach us to wait patiently for GOD's gifts—not to despair because He delays—not to cease praying because He gives not at once? For if He kept back for a time from His Apostles that best of all His gifts—the gift of His HOLY SPIRIT—that gift which was most needed by them and which He had so positively promised them,—we know surely that He withholds from us what we ask, not because He grudges it to us, but to make us more earnest in the asking.

But at last the appointed time arrived. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come." Now there is something in that time of Pentecost; for why was an especial time chosen for the gift of the HOLY GHOST? What was the day of Pentecost? Pentecost was one of the three great feasts which the Jews used to keep every year. It was kept to commemorate the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. During that feast men's minds would go back to that awful day when GOD came down in fire and a thick cloud to the top of the mountain, with thunderings and lightnings and great voices. But on *this* day of Pentecost another law was to be given. GOD was to come down again from heaven, but with another covenant; and this new law—this new covenant—was to be very different from the former. That former law was, you recollect, written on two tables of stone. Why so? What do those stone tables signify? They showed the hardness and unwillingness of men's hearts to receive that law. They showed mankind would be set against it; how the obeying that law

would not be a willing, ready service of love, but a service of constraint and obligation. And so, you remember, that law had to be ushered in with threatenings and denouncements of GOD's anger against transgressors. The mountain was made to burn. The earth shook. Blackness was spread over the heavens, and GOD's voice, as He spake, was so awful that the people begged that GOD would not speak to them any more. All this was to terrify the people into obedience.

But not so the new law given on Pentecost to-day by the HOLY SPIRIT. That law was not written on hardened tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of men's hearts. It was not a law of terror, but a law of love. So there was no need of thunderings and mighty voices and earthquakes to enforce that law. And yet the law of to-day written in our hearts is a far deeper, fuller, more binding law than that written on stone at Mount Sinai. The one is a service of fear,—the service of a slave; the other a service of love—the service of sons. The one man serves GOD because the thunders and blackness of the Mount of Sinai are overhanging his head; the other serves Him because the love of GOD is shed abroad in his heart by the HOLY SPIRIT which is given him. For such a man you might break, as did Moses, those two tables of stone. For such a man you might blot out the whole twentieth chapter of Exodus. You might strike the Ten Commandments out of Holy Scripture, and still, with the law of the Spirit of Love in his heart, he would serve GOD not a whit the less faithfully,—not a whit the less conscientiously than before.

And so this brings us to this question:—What sort of service is ours? Is it a willing service? a service of constraint? Do we serve GOD *only* because we feel

obliged to serve Him? Does our religion all the while go against the grain? For instance, when we take up our Bibles to read them, do we say to ourselves, Well! I suppose I must read my Bible now and then, or I shall have to answer for my neglect? Or when we go to church,—I must keep to my church, else I cannot be a professing Christian. Or when saying our prayers, I must say my prayers, else my conscience won't be quiet. Or,—I must take the Sacrament, else I cannot go to heaven. Is that the kind of service we yield to GOD—calculating how *little* He will accept—what is the smallest amount of service we can give Him—what is the least quantum of religion that will satisfy Him,—serving Him only because we are afraid of going to hell, and because we should wish to go to heaven,—but to get there at the cheapest conceivable rate, with the least possible trouble to ourselves? If so, we are still keeping the old Jewish feast of Pentecost, not the Pentecostal feast of Whitsuntide; we are not serving with the law of the Spirit of Love in our hearts; we are not serving GOD because the HOLY GHOST has taken of the things of CHRIST and shown them to us,—shown us of His love—shown us of His humility and suffering for us—shown us of the sympathy of His ascended manhood, and so filled our hearts with the glad ungrudging service of grateful love. No, we are still serving, as S. Paul says, in the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit.

Well, on this great feast of the old law the disciples were gathered together,—met together, we cannot doubt, for the purpose of praying for the great gift of the day; and suddenly there was heard amongst them the sound of a rushing, mighty wind. A *mighty* wind. And why a mighty wind? A wind, to show the un-

seen working of the HOLY SPIRIT; a mighty wind, to show the power of that working. See what He did for those Apostles. Not long before, S. Peter had trembled in the presence of the maid-servant, and had thrice denied his LORD. But now see that same Apostle, through the gift of to-day, boldly proclaiming that LORD to the very men who had put Him to death, and rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name. Mark S. James and S. John, once so fiery and unmerciful, humbled, and become as little children, through the power of that same Spirit. Call to mind, too, that fierce and angry crowd, which with bloodthirsty voices had shouted a few days back, "Crucify Him!" now, by the influence of the HOLY GHOST, pricked to the heart, and crying, "What shall we do?" See, again, the power of the HOLY GHOST shown in the quaking heart and the trembling limbs of the governor Felix, as, surrounded with all his power and magnificence, he was cowed by the words of the manacled and friendless prisoner who stood before him.

Dear brethren, how is it with us? Have we experienced the power of that Blessed Spirit? Have we sought to have that mighty wind breathed on us? Do we know of His might to transform our depraved nature? From weak, frail creatures, is He making us strong? From being vain and conceited, are we becoming meek and lowly? From being self-pleasing, are we growing self-forgetting? from obstinate, yielding; from being hasty of temper, gentle; from lustful, chaste and pure? Is His power working a change in us? If not, dearly beloved, the fault is ours. That HOLY SPIRIT Which descended to-day on that little company in the upper chamber, is the heritage of every one of us. "The promise is to you, and to your children."

Again: that rushing mighty wind, we read, filled the house where they were sitting—ay, every corner. There is no part, no place, no station or situation in life, which the HOLY SPIRIT cannot reach and sanctify. We sometimes think ourselves lonely and forsaken, with no one to care for us—no one to love us. We should remember, then, how that wind filled the house. That house is a figure of the Church: and whoever is in that Church, whatever his position in life,—however mean, however despised,—he is within the influence and the comfort of that Spirit.

But there was another appearance at the giving of the HOLY GHOST besides the rushing mighty wind which filled the house. There were also cloven tongues of fire seen which sat on the head of each disciple. Now we can easily imagine the reason why the Spirit descended with fire. "He," said S. John Baptist, speaking of our LORD, "He shall baptize you with the HOLY GHOST and with fire." Fire, we know, warms us; so does the HOLY SPIRIT warm our hearts with love to GOD, and with burning zeal in His service. Fire, we know, gives light; so does the HOLY SPIRIT enlighten our darkened minds. Fire, we know, purifies; so does the HOLY SPIRIT purify our sinful nature. No other fire can burn where the fire of GOD burns. You have seen, I dare say, how the strong light of the sun streaming in through our windows will put out the fire which is blazing on our hearths; so it is with the fire of the HOLY GHOST. Where that is burning within us, the fire of lust, the fire of hate, the fire of strife and variance, the fire of pride and jealousy must smoulder out and become extinguished. We can see, then, the meaning of the fiery tongues of flame. But why were they cloven—why divided? Why not a *single* tongue of fire?

To show the different operations of the HOLY SPIRIT: how He divideth to every man as He will—how He giveth to each man the particular gift which he needs with which to serve GOD. There were collected in that house different people, of different ages, different sexes, different stations, and each needing a different gift of GOD'S Spirit. There was Mary, the Mother of the LORD,—a mother and a maiden,—a mother, to teach us that mothers need the help of GOD'S Spirit in the care of their families; a maiden, to teach our young women that they need GOD'S Spirit to keep them chaste, pure-minded, modest in their dress and conversation, diligent in service, obedient to their masters and mistresses. Another cloven tongue of fire, too, was from that one self-same Spirit on S. John's head, the youngest Apostle, to teach us that young men also need—manly and strong though they be—a gift of GOD'S SPIRIT. "I write unto you, young men," says the same S. John, when he had become old, "I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." And how could they have overcome? How could *he*, as a young man, have overcome, but through the gift of this day's Pentecost? Would to GOD, dear brethren, it could be said of more of our young men, that they, through that gift, were daily overcoming the wicked one; that they would learn that manliness does not consist in each man holding his own, in maintaining his own rights, affecting independence of thought and action; but in seeking from the HOLY SPIRIT for that strength which they have not of their own, and in that strength *daring*, having the moral courage, to follow CHRIST. "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." That is true manliness; for it is the manliness of the Pattern Man, CHRIST JESUS Himself.

There, too, was the more aged S. Peter, to teach the old that they need the HOLY SPIRIT, as the support and comfort of their declining years; there were women from Galilee; there were some who were to fill high places in the Church, Apostles, Bishops; there were Evangelists, Priests, Deacons, labouring men. They were there each to receive his particular gift of the HOLY SPIRIT. Let this, then, teach us, my brethren, to be contented with the situation in life which GOD has appointed for us. Let us not think it hard if we are not in the position for which we think we are best suited. Wherever GOD has placed us, we have *some* work to do for Him; and if we seek it, He will give us that particular gift of the HOLY SPIRIT which we need to do that work.

And now once more, in conclusion. Those cloven tongues were said to *sit* on the heads of the disciples. What does sitting mean? It means abidance—continuance. Ah! brethren, this is the particular gift of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT; it is an *abiding* gift. Other gifts pass away. Riches take themselves wings, and flee away; friends depart in adversity; children GOD gives and GOD takes away. Health and strength fade; but the HOLY SPIRIT never leaveth us, except we *drive* Him away. When we are in temptation, He is near, to strengthen us; when in trial, He is by, to comfort us. When we fall, He is at hand, to raise us; when we pray, He is with us, to help us in praying, and to teach us how to pray. And when we come to die, He will be with us, to guide us through the dark valley; for our Blessed LORD has said, in words that cannot lie, "I will pray the FATHER, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."

A. V. R. P.

SERMON VII.

THE CLEANSING OF NAAMAN.

2 KINGS V. 12.

"ARE NOT ABANA AND PHARPAR, RIVERS OF DAMASCUS, BETTER THAN ALL THE WATERS OF ISRAEL? MAY I NOT WASH IN THEM AND BE CLEAN? SO HE TURNED AND WENT AWAY IN A RAGE."

THERE are few narratives in the Old Testament which are calculated to teach us of this present day such a useful lesson as that from which the above words are taken,—that passage in the Book of Kings which relates to the cleansing of Naaman the leper. May GOD give us grace to perceive the full meaning of the lesson taught by it!

Naaman was, we discover, captain of the host of the King of Syria, a great and honourable man with his master, because GOD had given deliverance by him to Syria. He had led the armies of his sovereign successfully to battle, was a skilful and renowned general, "a mighty man in valour," as the Bible tells us, but he was a leper.

Now leprosy is one of the most foul and loathsome diseases with which a man can be afflicted, and was very common in the country where Naaman lived. A per-

son cursed with this horrible complaint, which is contagious, and easily conveyed from one to another, was compelled in a great measure to live apart from his brethren; to see them as little as possible, to be avoided by his friends and neighbours, to be an outcast of society. And these rules were enforced in heathen countries with almost as great strictness as amongst GOD'S peculiar people. It was found necessary for the common good that lepers should be shunned, that they should live lonely and miserable, quite away from friends and acquaintance; and whenever those terrible white spots appeared on the body, that man knew his fate: he must depart altogether from home, he must become a solitary, out of the way of man, mix as little as possible with his fellow-creatures. He is a leper—he is unclean!

And such was Naaman. Doubtless from what we read about him, he had always been a soldier, trained to the art of war from his youth; and consequently when the leprous spots appeared on his body, although he must have been avoided to a great extent, yet the king of Syria, knowing his valour and usefulness, made an exception in his favour, and still retained him as "captain of the host." It seems according to the sacred narrative, that amongst other nations with which the Syrian king had been at war, Israel was numbered. A battle had been fought. The armies of Syria and the armies of the Israelites had been put in array. The children of Israel fled, the Syrians were victorious, and amongst those who were taken captive was a little Israelitish maid who waited on Naaman's wife. In the strange land of Syria, she doubtless often thought over the great benefits which GOD had bestowed upon her nation

and the privileges she had lost by her captivity,—of the glorious temple and the daily sacrifice! She doubtless pondered on the wonders which GOD had wrought through the hand of His prophets Elijah and Elisha: how the former had by his prayers obtained rain after a dreadful famine of three years' duration, and miraculously multiplied the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal in that terrible dearth. With all these wonders the captive girl must have been quite familiar. They had been doubtless the subjects of conversation and discussion in the villages of Samaria, and the cause of much wonder in the minds of the people who dwelt there. She knew, too, that the latter had divided by a miracle the waters of Jordan, and multiplied the widow's oil. She had doubtless heard of his having raised the Shunammite's son, and satisfied a hundred men with a few loaves of bread. And remembering all this, she exclaimed as she saw the mental and bodily suffering which her master endured through his loathsome disease: "Would GOD my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy!" And this saying of the captive maid was told unto Naaman. With what joy must he have heard of such a prophet! His heart must have bounded within him at the thought of being rid of the terrible complaint. Accordingly the king of Syria writes a letter to the king of Israel to get some authentic information about this man of GOD and asks that Naaman may be cleansed of his disease. The king of Israel thinking that the Syrian monarch was simply attempting to pick a new quarrel with him, exclaims in fear, "Am I GOD, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" Now the man of GOD,

Elisha, heard of this difficulty which had occurred to the king of Israel, and no doubt commissioned by GOD, sent to him saying, "Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

So Naaman came. He came in pomp and splendour to pay respect to Elisha, who he thought would by his own power and knowledge heal him of his malady. He arrived "with his horses and with his chariots," as befitted the captain of the host of the King of Syria, and "stood at the door of the house of Elisha." And now came the critical moment. Would the expectations of the Samaritan maid be fulfilled? Would Elisha the prophet really cleanse the Syrian leper? A messenger appears, and thus saith the man of GOD: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." A very simple remedy! He did not tell him to do impossibilities. There was the blue Jordan rolling by in the valley. Go and wash seven times and thou shalt be clean. "But Naaman," we are told, "was wroth, and went away and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his GOD, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." Oh! that he should have been so thankless, so proud, so unbelieving! Doubtless these rivers of Syria were broader and deeper, and nobler, than the little stream of Jordan that watered the valleys of Judæa. But the prophet of GOD had simply said, "Go and wash seven times in Jordan;" and it should have been done. "Then his servants came near

and said unto him, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" Wise and opportune advice! It came to Naaman, no doubt, as the voice of conscience, when we are about to commit sin, comes to us. It came to him, now with power, repeating the prophet's injunction, "Wash and be clean!" "Then went he down," says the sacred narrative, "and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean!" O miracle of wonder! O marvel of marvels! that the leper should be cleansed of his leprosy, and he who was diseased of his loathsome complaint! Yet so it was. "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child." With what feelings of rapturous delight, with what a flow of the heartiest pleasure, must Naaman have contemplated himself now! A moment ago a leper, a diseased, an outcast man. Now he was clean, and healed of his disease, for he had washed himself seven times in Jordan. That little Israelite maid was, no doubt, a captive no longer, for it was she who had told of the prophet that was in Samaria, and it was that prophet who, at the ALMIGHTY'S command, had cleansed the Syrian. This, then, beloved, is the simple narrative of the healing of Naaman the leper. Now, then, let us, with GOD'S grace, apply the teaching it sets forth to ourselves.

You know we were all born in sin: we inherited sin from our first parents, who transgressed the commands of their Maker, and were consequently expelled from Paradise. And no single thing that we can do for ourselves would or could save us from eternal wrath and

ruin. Insufficient of ourselves to help ourselves, we dare not look up. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD." Hell was our heritage, ruin our doom. But GOD of His infinite compassion, loved us when we were aliens to Him: when we lay in darkness and the shadow of death, the SON of GOD, begotten of the FATHER from all eternity, took man's nature upon Him in the womb of Mary, was born, as at Christmas, in a mean and lowly stable, worked for thirty years, as the son of Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth, at His supposed father's calling: and thus began His ministry of reconciliation. He went about doing good: the blind received their sight, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised. He went about poor and outcast, not knowing where to lay His head, preaching by the wayside, and suffering for the sins of mankind. In that bleak and desolate wilderness of Judæa He vouchsafed for our sakes to be tempted of the devil. GOD that made all things—you and me, this world and the stars and the angels—to be tempted by the devil! And all for our sakes, "for us men and for our salvation." But His sufferings ended not here. In the garden of Gethsemane and the hall of Pilate, in the court of Herod, and up that steep hill of Calvary, He —very GOD and very Man—was agonising for us. There He shed His most precious Blood. There the sins of the world were atoned for on the altar of the Cross. There He became the very Paschal Lamb. And when the work was finished, His Sacred Body was buried, and His human soul went down to Hades or Hell, to release the olden patriarchs from the place of departed spirits. His death affected them in their hidden abode, and then they attained to a celestial happiness. He

rose, as you know, on that first Easter morning when Mary Magdalene came to anoint His Sacred Body. He rose triumphant from the grave, and death and hell were vanquished. And after forty days, during which time He gave His eleven Apostles directions as to the formation and establishment of His kingdom (that is His Church on earth) He ascended again to His FATHER, and there sits in glory and majesty until His second coming. There, likewise, He perpetually pleads for us, there He continually shows His Five Sacred Wounds to the Eternal, and most graciously intercedes on our behalf. "By the mystery of His Incarnation," then, "by His Nativity and Temptation, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, His death and burial, by His glorious Resurrection and Ascension," let us pray to GOD the FATHER, for repentance, pardon, and grace. And how will His grace be given us? This is the point on which I wish to fix earnestly your attention. How will this grace be imparted? It will be bestowed on us for the sake of CHRIST through the sacraments and sacramental rites which He has instituted and left in His Church. By Baptism we are made Christians. It is the means He has appointed by which in the first instance the benefits of His Passion and death are conveyed to our souls. He might have applied the fruits of His sufferings in some other manner; but having chosen this way, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD;" having chosen this way, we are bound to believe in and act upon His express injunctions. Persons may say—but they would commit deadly sin if they did so, as a great many faithless people do,

it is to be feared—We can never believe that a little water poured upon a child's face, and a few words said over him, will make him regenerate. But in doing this they are following the example of Naaman. Such persons are too proud to wash in Jordan. They prefer their own ways of being saved; but they will discover, when it is too late perhaps, that there is only one way: "Go and wash seven times in Jordan." They will discover that that wicked spirit which led them to ask, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" has deceived them, betrayed them, and led them captive. They will discover that there is but one way, the narrow road to salvation, and that they have deliberately wandered from it.

The same is true of Confirmation: unbelieving and indifferent persons can see no advantage in the laying on of the hands of the Bishop. It is with them an idle ceremony, of the same kind as the Jewish forms of old; or, at best, an act of their own. They regard Sacraments as virtually useless. They talk much about faith—to them a mere historical assent to certain facts, exactly similar in character to that which is exercised when we speak of William the Conqueror, Edward VI., or Napoleon—and like Naaman of old, say, that if the prophet had bidden them do some great thing, they would have done it; but disbelieve the truth, that the sevenfold gifts of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT are conveyed by the imposition of the Bishop's hands.

And so with the power of Absolution given to Christian Priests at their ordination: "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST," said our LORD to His Apostles. "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and

whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." And this commission is with the same authority, and in the same words, bestowed by the Bishops now; and yet the unbeliever scoffs, and the careless smile, the infidel blasphemes, and the indifferent man, like Thomas, says, "I will not believe." Each thinks his own idea of religion the best; each imagines Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, to be better than all the waters of Israel. Each, perhaps, turns and goes away in a rage. And when the Church teaches that, in the Sacrament of the Altar, CHRIST'S Body and Blood are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful, shall we doubt it? Shall we wickedly say that the expression "eating CHRIST'S Body" is a fanciful metaphor, and regard the substance of the Sacrifice as simply bread and wine? GOD forbid! Such would be the opinion of heretics: let us avoid it. CHRIST Himself has said, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood,"—these are His own words,—and who shall affirm that they are not? Unlike Naaman the leper, then, let us not doubt GOD'S power; but when we kneel at His altar, pray for faith, "LORD, increase my faith;" and let us, with the blessed Thomas,—who once doubted, but afterwards believed,—as JESUS comes to us in that Sacrament, exclaim, "My LORD, and my GOD!"

Naaman's great and particular sin was want of faith in GOD'S power: he doubted if the washing in Jordan would cleanse him of leprosy; and it is to be feared that, with all our greater and higher privileges and advantages, this same spirit of unbelief is specially prevalent at the present time. Oh, beloved, if you should be tempted in this way, try with all your power to resist the temptation. Pray earnestly for GOD'S

grace. Say, again and again, "LORD, increase my faith,"—"LORD, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," and He will come to your aid in the conflict with Satan, who is thus, by insinuating doubts, trying to ruin your immortal souls. Trust the ALMIGHTY, then, and believe His words. Without faith, it is impossible to please GOD; for if you have not faith, be sure your heart is not right with Him. There is a canker somewhere. Sin is pressing you down, and repentance is urgently needed to set you right with your Heavenly FATHER, and gain for you a fresh supply of His virtues and grace. If this be so, return to Him in penitence and sorrow, and the precious Blood of His dear SON will cleanse your sin-sick soul. Learn His will, and do it; seek His commandments, and obey them. Wash seven times in Jordan; that is, readily and with thanksgiving avail yourself of His life-giving Sacraments, and He will be with you. Though the night be dark, and the way uncertain, He will lead you securely, and uphold you by His Almighty arm. Trust Him always, trust Him utterly. Though your path be over the great deep, and wave after wave of this world's sorrow encompass you, and the storm gathers heavier, and the sky grows blacker, His Voice—Who blessed the faithful one when Thomas doubted—will be heard above the tempest, "Be not afraid; it is I." And though now in this fleeting life we walk by faith, and only know Him through the sacramental veils in which He wills to shroud Himself at the altar, hereafter may we behold Him in His glory face to Face, when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, and speak His praises throughout all eternity!

F. G. L.

SERMON VIII.

THE REGENERATION OF SOCIETY.

S. JOHN XVI. 21.

"A WOMAN, WHEN SHE IS IN TRAVAIL HATH SORROW, BECAUSE HER HOUR IS COME: BUT AS SOON AS SHE IS DELIVERED OF THE CHILD, SHE REMEMBERETH NO MORE THE ANGUISH FOR JOY THAT A MAN IS BORN INTO THE WORLD."

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST thus addressed His Apostles, setting before them in a powerful image the labour which awaited them, and the joy which was in store. They were about to be left alone, and a strange work was theirs to do. He on Whom they relied when difficulties lowered around their path, was now to be taken away, and they were to look from Him to a world that was all against them. Theirs seemed to be the lot of Ishmael, perishing in the wilderness, rather than that of Isaac the heir of the promises. They needed counsel; they needed consolation; they needed strength. Nor did they know that all these gifts would be so abundantly supplied. Their present sorrow was a necessary means towards the end desired. While their LORD was with them in natural presence, they might

look to Him: but this was not enough. They had yet to be joined to Him in a mysterious unity of Divine life, and except He went away, the HOLY GHOST could not come. It was the HOLY GHOST Who should fill them with the strength and virtue of CHRIST'S indwelling presence. He must join them unto CHRIST. Thus He would be revealed as the Comforter, giving at once, by the power of inherent grace, counsel, consolation, and strength. Thus should they be enabled not merely to look to Him for external guidance, but to act with power within themselves as the bearers of His commission. Thus should they speak as the ambassadors of GOD, and in CHRIST'S stead. They themselves were to realize that they were one with Him. True indeed, they had already received CHRIST'S Precious Body and Blood from His own hands: but the heavenly food lay powerless in their unquickened bodies, waiting for the day when the Spirit should come upon them. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." He it was—it was the HOLY GHOST—Who should cause their bodies to be filled with the Divine power of that Food which they had already eaten. CHRIST'S presence within them was not to be as His presence in the sepulchre,—merely a powerless presence, merely a transitory one. The Food whereof they had eaten was in due time to penetrate, nourish, and glorify their whole system. As with their bodies they had partaken of CHRIST, so by the Spirit of GOD they were to be made one with Him. As by the HOLY GHOST He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, so by the HOLY GHOST His incarnate majesty was to be united unto them. As by the power of the HOLY GHOST, His Blessed Body rose in glory from the tomb, so by the same power did it fructify within them, encircling them

with His divine radiance, making them to know the power of His resurrection Who had been admitted to the fellowship of His sufferings, and been made conformable to His death. The glory faded from the tomb, but not from them. When the Spirit descended on them from on high, He was not coming in order to deprive them of the great gift. At Pentecost the seal of nature was broken by the power of grace; but the manifestation of their LORD'S risen power made them to be not empty sepulchres. Nay, it glorified them as living temples. Such was the change which should come upon them! And yet as it lay hid in the dark future, they must have wondered what the work should be, and when, and how. "How shall this be?" said the Blessed Virgin when the Angel announced that GOD should be conceived within her womb. We may be sure that the trembling Apostles wondered and mused—"How shall this be?"—when they heard from GOD thus born amongst us, that He should be one with them, and they one with Him! *They* looked forward in dread; and faith cheered the gloom. *We* look backward and marvel, and faith must enable us to embrace the mystery. They were not to despair amidst their labour, for they were not to be left alone. Blessed and soul-inspiring truth, that while the Apostolic ministry is upon earth, CHRIST is with us still. While they set forth His sacrifice before the FATHER, it is CHRIST Who intercedes. While they absolve, the cleansing virtue goeth out from Him. While they speak, it is not the wisdom of man, but the power of GOD. The Church of GOD is in a dark and miserable world, but the LORD of hosts is with us, the GOD of Jacob is our present help in time of trouble. What nation of the heathen

is there so great who hath GOD so nigh unto them as the LORD our GOD is in all things that we call upon Him for? As the power of CHRIST'S Body wins souls back to life, one by one, from the power of the devil, and we, my brethren, reflect that this work is to be done amongst you and in the world by our unworthy hands, we might indeed faint and grow pale, and be nigh unto death even as Rachel, and say of each one, this is Ben-Oni, the child of my sorrow, but our heavenly FATHER bids us look away from our anguish to His Almightiness. He says of each regenerate soul, This is Benjamin, the son of my right hand. Truly it is the right hand of the LORD which bringeth these mighty things to pass, and therefore shall the voice of joy and health never perish from the dwellings of the righteous, from the city of our GOD. May we, dearly beloved, ever dwell together in the unity of this one cleansing Body, of this one quickening Spirit!

As we ponder upon GOD'S Holy Word, we cannot but admire how type, and symbol, and prophecy, and precept mingle themselves together. We read of the past: and "these things were written for our instruction." We read of the future; and yet not so as to gratify our curiosity, but for our conscience to be guided into holy action. Precepts are brought home to us by the force of symbolical intimation, and the very words which teach us what to do, pourtray also the circumstances under which our work shall be accomplished. It is so in the words of the Gospel: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." Let us trace out one or more of the precepts especially

applicable to our time and circumstance, which are involved in this mysterious parable.

We have here the company of the Apostles set before us in its unity, as the foundation of the Church. The same image afterwards met the eyes of him who wrote of our LORD's discourse, which now he heard. "There appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child, cried, travailing with birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto GOD and to His throne."[1] The woman then represents the Apostles, primarily, and so the Church of GOD in all ages abiding in Apostolical inheritance and fellowship. When we read that the woman was with child, we need not hesitate to assume that by this is meant the propagation of Divine life amongst men. Observe however that this maternal character of the Church, is widely different from the symbol which is used to delineate the Jewish ministrations. "The law was our schoolmaster," an attendant, a nurse, teaching, leading, helping. The Church is the Bride of CHRIST, in travail with her children, giving them her own life, living in them; the Church of each generation one with her children in the future, and never separated from the Communion of Saints who have gone before. Our LORD's words then clearly set the Church before us, as possessing a transmissive principle of heavenly life, and this can be in no other way than by the uninterrupted communication in virtue of Apostolical power from one generation to another—the uninterrupted communication

[1] Rev. xii. 1—4.

of the Body of CHRIST. He Who sent forth the twelve shall ever see His seed upon the earth. He has prolonged His days even unto us, and from age to age the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. What follows then from our claim to be the Church of GOD? What follows from our participation in this divine life? The life which we inherit is not given us for ourselves alone. It is an energising power, working in us for the future, regenerating the future by us, perpetuating itself not without our instrumentality. It is the sacred deposit committed unto us, and by us to be given to them that shall come after. So, then, the law of the Church's life involves the law of her action. Divine life and Church action imply one another. They are correlatives. No man liveth to himself, for if he strive to do so, his life is none. His actions, if they have no aim for other's good, can be no living energies, can be only as the spasms of the dead. He who thus strives to keep a life that heeds not others, abides not in the vine whose branches are continually spreading themselves over all the earth. The life which he cares not to hand on, he will not be permitted to retain. He is cut off and is withered, and is bound up against the day of the burning. The first practical conclusion, therefore, which forces itself upon us, as a deduction from these premises, is the duty of providing for the permanence and healthy action of the Church of GOD. This is a duty which should come home with no ordinary force to us, in the peculiar circumstances of our time and nation.

The increase of our population both at home and in our colonies is indeed one feature of our times which should arouse us to unwonted endeavours. We must remember that as the Church of GOD we are not merely

a society of men, professing a distinct and definite doctrine, which we are to hold up before other men. Far more than this. We are not simply to be the teachers: as we are the natural, so we must be the spiritual *parents* of the rising generations. The life they need, they must get not simply by knowing what we said and did, but by actual contact with ourselves, receiving by ministrations which our wealth has supplied and our priesthood has exercised, the gift of heavenly life, committed by apostolical fellowship unto ourselves from CHRIST the Head of the Body. Legislators may make arrangements for the outward convenience of men. It is the Church of GOD, that is to say, it is you yourselves, my brethren, as inheriting a Divine life, who must, and who alone can regenerate society. Bear in mind that the work which is to be done by the Church of GOD, is to be done by individuals acting as members of that glorious Body. I do not say that there is not great difficulty in the way of men so acting, when the corporate powers of the Church are so sacrilegiously crippled by the influences of the world. But it is the healthy action of individuals, each in his own sphere carrying on the functions which are peculiarly his as a member of the Body, thus it is that the action of the whole Body must be gradually invigorated, and if GOD so will, speedily restored. Do not suffer doubts and difficulties to stand in the way of duties. The performance of duties is the way to remove the difficulties. The future is in our power. Shall we kindle it with the light of the LORD, or shall we suffer our lamps to die out, that so our evil odour may come up in the day of GOD's judgment? Be not dismayed because the work of the future seems so overpowering. The Body of CHRIST is

the stone cut out without hands, which grew and filled the world. As the beginning of the work was divine, so is its continuance. It is by your hands and yet not by your hands, for the work is not your's but GOD's. Yet is it also not GOD's except through you. Act therefore in faith, and if you have any value for the life of GOD which you possess, remember that it pledges you to continued efforts for its propagation. To us the Anglo-Saxon race has been pre-eminently fulfilled the promise made to our forefather—GOD shall enlarge Japhet. Let us then not be slothful. While we are peopling the world with a fallen humanity, let us hasten to recall our offspring to the glory of a new Birth of GOD. As we transmit the deadly communion of the First Adam: so let us transmit the quickening vitality of the Second. How dreadful, how terrible must the future seem, when we contemplate it by itself, as a vast phænomenon over which we have no control. We must take comfort from our LORD's teaching. It is not beyond our control. We are to give it a regenerating principle. This work is indeed not to be done by listlessness or at our ease. The pangs of childbirth are chosen as an illustration of the difficulty with which our divine life is to be handed on. Every woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come.

From these words I would beg you further to consider the great difficulty of handing on the heavenly principle unimpaired. By suffering the Church was first established. By suffering it must be maintained. It can have no life except by the Cross. From the remembrance of this we may derive great practical encouragement. The very difficulties we have to encounter are a token that GOD's work is in our hand. Although we

are to act in a divine power, this does not override human infirmity. The gifts of our spiritual nature, like the faculties of our mental and bodily constitution, are to be strengthened with diligence, and oftentimes exerted with pain. They are not the less real, because emergencies may sometimes appear to baffle them. They are from GOD. They are in man. They are ours just in the degree which we may determine. They are given to us, however, as all GOD'S gifts are given, according to a law. It is not the will of the moment which can strengthen us with all spiritual might. It is the steadfast will, the practised resolution, whereby such power must be obtained. The growing energies of a self-denying life are rewarded with its fulness. The will to serve GOD is the way to be strengthened for His service. By prayer, by agony, that will must be made known. From his stronghold in the world we shall never be able to cast Satan out, except by prayer and fasting. Thus must the divine strength be sought. My dear brethren, seek it. Look forward to difficulty, and welcome it; but above all things, prepare for it.

Again: do not think that because these words were spoken to the Apostles, therefore you have no part in them. There are indeed peculiar portions of the struggle against Satan which the priesthood are to carry on. There is none of you, but has *some* portion for *himself* to carry on. The possession of life is a pledge to the struggle. The Body of CHRIST is one. In the apocalyptic vision there is but one woman travailing with Child. The functions of the priesthood although proper and special to them, are not without the sympathy and concurrence of the whole body. Each branch of the Church requires the co-operation of the rest. No indi-

vidual in the Church, whosoever he be, can act in isolation. All of us, wherever we are, must be ready to work in union with the rest. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member rejoice all the members rejoice with it. If we are in a place where there is every comfort, where there is no struggle, then we are not in the Church of GOD. So then the continuity of life between the mother and the child teaches us our responsibility as a Church to bring forth fruit unto GOD. The unity of life whereby every member is made alive to the anguish of the birth pangs, teaches us how the possession of life, as members of the Church of CHRIST, pledges every one to share the difficulties which encompass the Church in her action. The strength for action in each individual depends upon the steadfastness of his own will to use the powers which he receives in the Body of CHRIST. The strength of the Church depends upon the resolves of individual members. Seek then, seek from GOD the unbending will which shall enable you to use the Divine functions of your regenerate nature, that so you may share alike the anguish, the agony, and the triumph and the joy.

Many of our difficulties arise from the weakness of our apprehension of the Divine strength which animates us; and for these we are ourselves accountable. As the loss of natural powers by neglect or abuse is at our own door, so is the decay of holy power our own work also. The Divine principle is of itself almighty; and we are the occasion of our own weaknesses. At times, however, we are exposed to increased difficulties, over which we have no control, so as to prevent. By these we must be aroused to the more enterprising endeavour in order to overcome. While the Church is in her

agony in the regeneration of the world, there are hostile powers eager to frustrate her work. So we read of another wonder in heaven—the dragon standing before the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as it was born. The work of the Church, then, is not only a difficult one, but it is to be carried on amidst circumstances of difficulty. From this consideration I would urge upon you the duty of a joyful faith in the contemplation of the peculiar difficulties of our present times. Whether or no they are greater than difficulties which were of old, we are not called to examine. What is more, we are not competent to judge. This alone we know, that the devil in every age has been, and ever will be, on the watch to destroy the offspring of the Church. Difficulties, therefore, must never destroy our confidence. Look to the past, and consider how GOD has preserved His race amongst us; so will you be reassured to trust Him for the continuance of His loving power. Look upon the difficulties of the present, and consider them as the evidences of Satan's malice, and so of GOD's favour. The Church of GOD in the present day is sadly enfeebled by the consequences of her own defects in years gone by. We see how the mere increase of numbers fills us with amazement, and we scarcely know how to gather in the multitudes who thus need to be tended as the children of GOD. At the same time, however, the faculties of the human race have been developed. The facilities of worldly power have been multiplied. Shall we, then, look upon their increase with perplexity? GOD forbid! Science raises up a show of difficulties in the way of faith: the unbelieving alone can be perplexed. Faith must always claim science also for her own, and raise it to the work

of heaven by her own regenerating power. Whilst the faculties of humanity develope themselves, although their natural course would be for evil, being all developments of a tainted system, a fallen race, yet must the Church of GOD infuse into them her Divine life; and so shall they only unfold as the brighter blossoms, giving new forms of strength to her holy children. As the powers of combination for evil are multiplied in the world, so must the Church of GOD seek, by every new power, to multiply her own facilities. As the changes of temporal dynasty seem to give freer scope to infidelity and self-will, so must the Church of GOD learn the more fully to trust not in princes, nor in any arm of the flesh, for there is no help in them, but in her own inalienable inheritance of Divine power. No power of the world can stay society from ruin; society must be regenerated by the power of union with CHRIST. Thus, and thus alone, can it receive life and strength. Mankind with numbers increased,—faculties of corrupt tendency, developing new powers and facilities whereby self-will may be indulged, leading them onward in a path of ungodly self-aggrandisement,—this miserable spectacle meets us as we look into the future. We might tremble did we look to man; we dare not tremble, because we look to GOD. We might hesitate and remain inactive, did we look to human agency alone. We must be stirred to the more diligent work, because it is GOD Who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The presence of Divine power inherited from CHRIST gives the Church strength for her travail. This alone can give it.

The increased pains and difficulties, are but a sign that her deliverance is nearer, that her joy is at hand.

A woman when she is in travail hath her sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. As the number of GOD'S elect is gradually made perfect, so is her joy getting towards completion. What, then, if the pains of childbirth be excessive! How great shall be the joy when the regenerate people shall have been fully prepared for the LORD! Oh, then, if you care for the life which you now have in the Church,—if you look forward to the joy of the Resurrection,—take your part with earnestness in the extension of that Divine life, that others through you may be brought to live with risen powers. By your devotion shall the healthy action of the whole body be increased; and your life is dependent upon your sympathy with the work of the whole body. Look away from the world to the glory which is set before you. Look not to the present suffering, but to the future crown. Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

The Church of CHRIST, as possessing a power of new life to be transmitted from generation to generation, is represented as a woman travailing with child. There is yet another representation of the Church of all ages meeting her LORD in the Resurrection. When she is regarded as apart from time, she is simply styled the Bride of CHRIST. All generations of her children are one. They are no more distinct from her even in appearance, for time alone caused separation. Oh! what a glorious unity binds us, then, together in the Apostolical fellowship. If we have inherited the Presence of CHRIST'S Body, we are all one in Him. "We are all

one Bread, and one Body, because we are all partakers of that one Bread." Look backward, then, to CHRIST, the Fount of Grace. Behold Him present with you still, in mystic power and Divine reality. Look onward, and behold the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Then look to the duties of personal devotion and public effort to which the Church of GOD calls you now, that so—by your co-operation—what is wanting may be restored amongst us, and what is weak may be strengthened; that so the life which you enjoy may be handed on to generations yet unborn, or if born, yet unregenerate. Pause not; turn not back. The Church of GOD demands your sympathy. The inheritance of the past makes you the guardians of the future. The future is in your power, as the stewards of the manifold grace of GOD. Be resolved that, so far as in you lies, by every power which GOD has given, the Church throughout our empire shall have full and perfect triumph. Bear with present difficulties; rejoice in present self-denials. These are but the pains whereby a glorious offspring shall be given you. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she is delivered of a child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

R. M. B.

SERMON IX.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.[1]

GEN. III. 8.

"AND ADAM AND HIS WIFE HID THEMSELVES FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD GOD."

WHEN GOD made man at first, He made a being whom He intended to walk by the rule of love. As the holy angels were created to dwell before Him without shrinking from the contemplation of His glory and majesty, because the only feeling which they have towards GOD is that of love; so was man also intended to live in that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear," before the Presence of his Maker. But as soon as the first sin had been committed, a change took place in the feeling of man towards GOD; and instead of only loving he began to be afraid of Him. "They heard the voice of the LORD GOD, walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the Presence of the LORD GOD amongst the trees of the garden."

Now this first Adam contained within his one person the whole nature of mankind. "In Adam all die." In him therefore may all be said to have been at the first, since from him every one that ever lived has derived

[1] A Sermon for Sexagesima Sunday.

his nature as man. And he being thus also the representative—before it had come into a divided and separate being—of the whole human race; so he was no less the representative of all who become sinners through their own act following on their inheritance of his sinful nature: and—to come to the special point before us,—in his sin we see the type and moral character of all sin that ever has been, or will be committed. For the sin of Adam was that of disobedience. GOD had given him one law, "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it:" and He had revealed to him the consequence of disobeying that law, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In this law lay the whole probation of Adam's life and spirit. As long as he obeyed it, he remained the pure, undying, and fearless being that GOD had made him; the companion of his Maker; the all but equal of holy angels; the unquestioned lord of that lower creation, which as yet knew nothing of savageness and discord; the rightful inhabitant of a Paradise, we know not how like to heaven. But when he turned himself against GOD, and the good nature which He had given to him, then GOD and all that was good was arrayed against him. He was no longer pure, but a sinner; no longer undying, but a sinner returning again to the dust from which he had been taken; no longer fearless of GOD'S Presence as the holy angels, because looking to It as his greatest joy, but flying away to hide himself as soon as the Voice of the LORD GOD was heard in the garden. And falling from the bliss of Paradise, the peace and original harmony of Paradise was banished from the earth at his fall, so that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together with fallen man.

This primitive sin, then, contained in itself the germ of all other sins, and the consequences which followed upon it led the way for all the long array of woes and sorrows that have since come upon men through sinfulness. For though since that time every child of Adam has had his own individual and separate trial of obedience, there is in each one of us so much of that old leaven of the first sin remaining as to bias by a corruption of nature,—even in the regenerate,—every act of their trial; and to make them feel so long as they are in the body, that it is the "body of this death."

And, if we come to look at each definite act of sin, it will be seen that it bears in no trifling degree, the marks of its parentage and derivation from that first sin recorded in the account of the fall. GOD has set us a law, not indeed contained entirely in one single article, yet a law in which every section and particular may be brought under one head, and expressed in a single word, —obedience. Our first father was set upon his probation in respect to obedience in one thing, that he should not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: we are set upon our trial as to many other things which have since then arisen in the world to be unfit for us to partake of, and which GOD has forbidden to us. But whether in one or in many the trial is still in our obeying, the fall in our disobedience. Our heavenly FATHER gives to every one of us so much knowledge of His Will,—by conscience illuminated by grace, by the training of our childhood's days, by the constant voice of His Church,—as to put us in a similar position to that of Adam after he had received the command, 'Thou shalt not eat of it.' He has given to us also the warning that disobedience ends in eternal death. And, as

He gave to Adam the power, by nature, to stand against temptation, and to avoid sin and its punishment; so He gives grace to us that we may if we will, be obedient to His commands, resist the seductions of the evil one, and keep from falling away to sin and sorrow.

Although, therefore, GOD was pleased to hold more direct and visible intercourse with man before sin entered into the world, and death by sin,—and hence the disobedience of Adam may appear at first sight to have more of ingratitude and more of the *unreasonableness* of sin than the disobedience of Adam's children;—yet the sin of the one and the sin of the many are so alike in general relation to GOD and His Will; and the position of ourselves by the grace of our new creation is made so similar to that of Adam before the Fall, that we cannot point out to our consciences—if fairly instructed—any real distinction between his transgression and our own.

So, when we read, or hear read in Church, the account of that first crime from which all the sin, disease, sorrow, and death, that clouds over the happiness of this world, has had its rise: we must not think that it was greater, or less excusable, than our own transgressions of GOD's law: that our first parents had advantages which we have not—more opportunity of avoiding temptation, more knowledge of GOD's Will, or more power to do it. We may not say that the ways of GOD are not equal, and that some are placed in easier positions with greater advantages than others are with lesser; for "My ways are always equal, saith the LORD." Sin is one, though it present itself in a multitude of shapes; and obedience is one, though it be required of us in many particulars: and whatever the strength of the temptations that may be held out to us, yet GOD's help

given to us by grace is ever stronger than sin, and by it we may overcome our tempter.

Observe, moreover, that as sin in us and in our forefather Adam has always a sameness of nature, so there is always a similarity in the conduct of the sinner. Adam was made to love GOD, not to be afraid of Him; and so are we. The religion of a well-trained Christian child contains no other feeling towards GOD than that of love, because that alone is the true character of the bond by which GOD has joined it to Himself in its new birth. A little child knows at once what it is to love GOD; but you must force its understanding into an unnatural course to teach it that GOD is a Person to be afraid of. That terror of GOD which cannot spring out of holiness and innocence, comes of itself, however, without teaching or forcing, with sin. It is the first impulse of a person who wilfully sins to be afraid of his all-holy and all-loving GOD. Whenever any sinner has done wrong, he would if he could hide himself from the sight of his Creator as Adam and his wife hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden. To be carried into the Presence of GOD immediately after having disobeyed Him by a sin of murder, theft, adultery, or any other of the plainer sort of crimes, is what every one thinks of with the greatest horror. And if the conscience is not deadened by frequent transgression unrepented of, there is the same fear of facing GOD his Judge in every Christian who is tempted to sins of anger or other acts of disobedience, into which we are most of us so often falling. So, just before death, how anxiously every one will try to avoid giving way to temptation: and how unrepented sins will rise up and terrify them: and if it is possible for them to make amends to

any for injury that they have done them, what efforts dying men will use to do so, because they dread appearing before GOD with consciousness of sin. And if they are unable to feel sure of a sincere repentance for past sins, they already have a foretaste of that dreadful fear which will come upon the wicked at the last day, when they shall call upon the rocks and hills to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne.

And even as it is at death, and will be at the Judgment Day, so it is ever: sin makes us *afraid* of the Presence of GOD, if our consciences are easily roused to see the sinfulness of sin: or if they are so far deadened as to care little about sinning, then still sin makes men wish to be anywhere rather than before their GOD; which is but fear partly overcome by recklessness.

Thus it is that when men are conscious they are not living as they ought to be living, they have the greatest dislike to anything which strongly and very pointedly reminds them of GOD and His truth. It is distasteful to them to hear that when they come to church they come to a place where GOD is more immediately pleased to vouchsafe His Presence than elsewhere. They have their reasons for coming to church—reasons of all sorts —but they do not wish to come into the Presence of GOD, and therefore they would rather think that they can hide themselves from His sight, in Church as well as out of it. If they could be quite sure that this is none other than the house of GOD, and not merely a house of man; quite sure that "GOD is in this place," and not their neighbours and clergymen only: if they could be quite sure of this, it would frighten rather than comfort them; and perhaps they could never be so hardy

as to dare to come again in their sins. The same feeling it is, for the most part,—though disguised under other words—which gives men such strong prejudices against what are called forms and ceremonies in Divine Worship; against the symbol of the faith being placed before their eyes in the church; and against all that splendour and beauty which each one tries to give to his own house, but which so many shrink from bestowing on GOD'S house. When the Cross in bodily shape stands out to be seen of every one,—as it does in many churches,—men are called to a closer remembrance of all that the Cross of CHRIST means—of His pain and suffering and death for us: of our duties of obedience and patience and self-denial for the sake of Him Who thus died upon it. When the font is placed full in our sight and little ones are often made Christians before us all, our own Baptism is continually re-presented before us, and a voice comes as it were from the very stone itself to tell us that we have to live as Christians, and not as heathens, in the sight of GOD. When the altar is made worthy to be called GOD'S holy table, we begin to feel that what is bestowed at that table is a good gift from Him: and when from its position and its richness our eyes cannot fail to rest upon it every time we go in or out of Church; then it is to those who never approach its foot, a continual reproach which they would rather have hidden as much as possible from their eyes; as it is to those who there receive the gift of GOD, a continual reminder of His Presence and love.

All such things are intended to be, and are, witnesses to the eye of the great purpose for which the church is built, that we may have a place where specially we may meet GOD, as it were face to face. But, when we have

done things which we know in our conscience to be wrong, and are yet unwilling to forsake the sin and repent of it, then we do not wish to be reminded of the Presence of GOD. We would rather forget that He is present, or if we can, bring ourselves to believe that He is not. And anything which disturbs our forgetfulness by calling that Presence to our mind disquiets us, and makes us uneasy while we wish to be comfortable and at rest. Unconsciously we try to hide ourselves from GOD by shutting out of our sight the outward witnesses of His Presence, because of His Presence Itself we are —as our forefather Adam was—afraid.

And what is true of the outward forms and signs of religion—of altars and fonts, of crosses, of the beautiful decorations of GOD'S sanctuary, and all other reminders and memorials of His Presence,—is also true of the practice of religion. A very wicked man, however bold he may be at facing his fellow-men, is yet afraid to pray. We all have a consciousness that to go down on our knees and speak to GOD is to bring ourselves—we know not how nearly, or how far off—into the Presence of our Maker and Judge. The very reason why we kneel is that we may show our humility and inferiority before Him; and I do not suppose—I never heard of such a thing, though blasphemous *words* are so sadly common—that the most hardened man would kneel down in wilful, deliberate, mockery of prayer. It would be bringing himself more directly than he dares before the GOD in Whom he is compelled to believe, whatever be his wickedness and hardness of heart; and it may be that a spark of unperverted instinct is left which shows him as much as this at least. And is not the same thing true of most of us, though GOD be praised that

we are not to be numbered with such as those I speak of? Do not our sins make us shrink from bringing ourselves (by this act of the will, in kneeling,) into GOD'S Presence as the Hearer of Prayer? Would we not, at times, rather escape from saying our prayers if we dared to omit them, because we have a disinclination to feel that GOD is near? Are there no occasions when some really do so endeavour to hide themselves from His Presence, because they feel that prayer does not fit in consistently with the occupation which has filled up the hours going before; or with evil passions or angry words unrecalled? In such cases there is often, I think, a feeling that we must either give up praying because we dare not come thus into the Presence of GOD, or else that we will formally, for mere habit's sake, and therefore recklessly, do it, though with no good motive and no holy wish at our heart.

Again, how often is such a fear of GOD'S Presence the reason why people stay away from the Holy Communion! I do not mean those I spoke of before, who would if they could shut the altar itself out from their sight because it witnesses against them; but of many who bring themselves to come now and then—at Christmas or Easter-tide—to the LORD'S Supper; but at most times of its administration try to hide themselves from their LORD GOD and say, "I was afraid." They say, "I am not good enough to come often," which means, My sins are so many that I dare not meet my GOD. To come to His altar is such a very solemn thing—it makes one feel that it is possible to hide from His Presence no longer; and such a feeling would bring discomfort and uneasiness with every fresh sin. And so, because the fear of GOD'S Presence is greater than

the love of it, it is easier to them to stay from His altar than to overcome their sins; and after a time it is most likely that instead of love growing more and more perfect, so as more and more to cast out fear, fear grows so strong that it leaves no place for love in their hearts.

And yet who can ever be so foolish and blind as to hope that they will gain anything in the end by thus trying to hide themselves from the Presence of their LORD GOD? As it was with Adam after his sin, so must it be with all his children. They may try to hide themselves, but He will call them forth with a Voice which cannot for a moment be resisted. And then the Presence which was before offered in love and refused, will be given in judgment; so that to hide from it will be impossible. "Every eye shall see Him:" and the fear of their Judge which made many hide themselves from His Presence on earth will be in itself the proof of guilt, the sentence of condemnation, and the beginning of punishment.

But now consider what should be our true feelings as Christians with regard to the Presence of GOD. There was a time when Adam must have rejoiced to hear the Voice of GOD, and to behold Him face to Face. And the right to this joy depending on his obedience, had he remained sinless he could never have wished to hide himself amongst the trees of the garden, but would always have come forth with glad haste to meet Him in Whom his soul delighted.

Such, even in our condition, may be, and such ought to be, our desire, and whatsoever makes that desire otherwise is nothing but sin. We ought gladly to accept and use all outward things that help us to remember and realize the Presence of our King. We ought to

love to make our churches and altars most beautiful and glorious, as "seeing Him" with the eye of faith, "Who is invisible" to our bodily sight. Knowing that "the LORD is indeed in this place," and that it "is the very gate of heaven," we should rejoice at everything, be it Cross or anything else, which says to us "GOD is here," and will not suffer us to forget so blessed a truth. If we dislike to be reminded of our LORD's Presence it is because we dread it, and would as far as possible hide ourselves while it is in our power to do so. If we love to be so reminded, let us cherish that love, that by more constant reminding of His Presence our hearts may more entirely rest in it, and find it our strength and joy. So it should be our earnest endeavour to feel GOD near to us when we are praying. We should try to cultivate the fixed instinct—so it may be called, rather than conviction—that our ever-living SAVIOUR and GOD vouchsafes to hear His people now with the same gracious readiness which was always extended to those who came near Him with prayers in the days of His earthly obedience; that He is as ready now as then to come at the call of those who earnestly and faithfully seek Him; and that if it is no longer His good pleasure to work miracles of healing upon the bodies of His servants, yet He ever vouchsafes to them in His Presence by grace, the gift of healing for their souls, by which they that wait on Him may renew their strength . . . may run and not be weary, and may walk and not faint.

The greatest bliss of Heaven—that for which all Saints have longed and waited, that to which all we who make up the Church Militant should ever be looking forward,—is the Vision of GOD's Presence finally unveiled in a more perfect way, even than to Adam in Paradise,

or to the eye of faith in the devout and therefore clear-sighted Christian. "In Thy Presence is the fulness of joy," said one who knew what his hope was, and whereon it was founded, and "at Thy Right Hand there are pleasures for evermore." If, then, brethren, we seek to have a foretaste of Heaven in the joy of GOD'S Church below, let us seek it in gaining a measure of that Presence here, of which the "fulness" will be at His Right Hand above. It will be to us, in our Christian course, as the pillar of light which guided the Israelites in their journeying to the promised land. And as in the city of GOD above neither the light of the sun nor of the moon will be needed, so in His kingdom below we need no other illumination than His Presence Who came that He might be the Light shining in darkness: a Light not only glorious to the eye of the imagination, but the one real and true source of our spiritual existence, our spiritual vigour, and our spiritual joy.

J. H. B.

SERMON X.

CHRIST'S SPECIAL PRESENCE AND BLESSING IN DESERT PLACES.

S. Luke ix. 12.

"We are here in a desert place."

Jesus had now given His commission to His twelve Apostles to exercise the ministry of His Gospel and to heal the sick; they had been exercising this ministry apparently for the first time apart from Himself, and then returned to Him to render an account of its success. And soon after this, Jesus took them aside into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But the people, who had probably heard of the miraculous cures both of Himself and His Apostles, followed Him hither in great numbers; and here He taught them in the things concerning the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. And then at the close of the day the Apostles proposed to Him that He should send the people away, in order that they might go to the towns and country round about and lodge and get victuals, urging to Him as the reason why He should do this, "for we are here in a desert place." He gave to His Apostles this short reply to their application: "Give ye

them to eat." They stated the impossibility (as they thought) of their doing this, in the circumstance of their having with them but five loaves and two fishes, whilst the multitude to be fed were about five thousand in number.

Now perhaps this reply of the Apostles indicated a want of faith in them. They had lately been enabled at their Master's word to give miraculous cures to the sick, and now He told them with respect to the wants of the multitude, "Give ye them to eat." Of course He knew how very limited a supply of food they had with them, in their five loaves and two fishes. And so had the Apostles now straightway acted upon this command in faith, we may certainly presume that they would have found their scanty supply miraculously increased so as to suffice the wants of the whole multitude. But they do not seem to have been ready thus to take JESUS at His word, thus to act upon His command; and so they replied that they had no food sufficient to feed this multitude except they should go and buy meat for all the people. Eventually then He gave His Apostles more distinct directions; He told them to make the people sit down in companies, and then Himself took the bread and blessed it, and gave it to His disciples for distribution amongst the people, when it was miraculously increased for their adequate support, leaving even twelve baskets full of fragments remaining.

Now there are several points very full of spiritual instruction for us in this miracle.

First, there is this general lesson to be learnt from it; that if we care for, and seek Him, and follow Him, He will not neglect to provide what is needful for our wants. This multitude followed Him for His ministry and His

healing blessings into a desert place; they stayed all the day long with Him there, until the evening was drawing on, though they had nothing with them to eat; they had left their homes and all, and had nothing to depend upon but Him; they seem to have had little or no thought indeed about what was necessary for their bodily wants, to have lost sight of their food in seeking for CHRIST, and His word, and His blessings. And therefore He Himself took all these their bodily needs into His own care, He took upon Himself to provide abundantly for all these wants. And now there is of course such a thing as a thoughtless recklessness about worldly things which is mere folly and ungodliness; that is, when it is caused by a man squandering his substance upon his present indulgences, and so living merely for the present day, and having no care at all for the future. This is of course the mere recklessness of a beast that perishes; this is really neither Christian nor even human. But there is another recklessness about worldly things which is very different from this, and which the conduct of these people who flocked to JESUS in the desert place about Bethsaida sets forth to us. And it would perhaps be better for us if we showed something of this kind of recklessness. It would be well for us, perhaps, if we exercised less prudence and forethought than we are inclined to do in following CHRIST. For instance, we are often ready to give money to some urgent claim upon our charity, some service to CHRIST; but then we must see and be satisfied that we can do this with prudence, without risking want for ourselves or families: or we may be willing to take upon ourselves some active Christian duties, in visiting amongst the sick and poor, in teaching

the ignorant children, or in giving daily attendance at GOD'S house of prayer; but then first we must consider whether we can undertake such things without the risk of some serious inconvenience to ourselves or our worldly interests. Now this is just the sort of prudence and forethought which these people in the desert place about Bethsaida did not show; and it was just for this neglect of theirs to take all such prudent care about their worldly and bodily wants, that CHRIST JESUS took it all upon Himself and provided abundantly for them. And would to GOD indeed that we could place the same faith and trust in His care, and show a like recklessness and want of worldly prudence in following Him.

This then is the general lesson to be gathered from this incident. But now the one point upon which I wish to insist, is that indicated in the words of the text,—that circumstances of the greatest apparent dearth and destitution are no bar to CHRIST'S abundant help; rather that in this world the circumstances of the greatest apparent dearth and destitution are the very special occasions for CHRIST to give His abundant help, and that the rule and principle of His working upon earth, and in the poor destitute hearts of earth is ever still the same,—to "make the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad," to "turn the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well." Here was a great multitude, and without food; they were in a place utterly destitute of food; to man's sight this was a place where it was absolutely hopeless, absolutely impossible to provide any food. Nay, not only in the sight of ordinary men, for even CHRIST'S Own Apostles said, "we are here in a desert place;" even they thought and said that the only hope and means

of providing food consisted in their going away to procure it elsewhere. But no, this was not so; for CHRIST was there, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; He was there, He to Whom desert and Paradise, scarcity and plenty are absolutely the same. And so at once He gave a miraculous increase and blessing to the small supply of food at hand, and made it abundantly sufficient for all the wants of His people.

But there is a special point for our observation in this circumstance, and that is, that CHRIST gives a sufficient supply for the wants of His people without any reference to the extent of the means to be increased and rendered sufficient. With CHRIST'S blessing there need be no proportion at all between the scanty means for our support and the amount of support yielded to us thereby. Thus CHRIST (we know) upon another occasion wrought a second miracle of very similar character to this one, in feeding four thousand men besides women and children with seven loaves and a few little fishes. Now there was no proportion at all between the means of supply in either of these instances, and the multitude of people who were to be supplied with food. It was not as though the scanty food had to be doubled in amount, or even to be increased tenfold. It must have been increased and multiplied at least a thousand fold in each of these instances; so that CHRIST'S power and will to provide what is needful in time of dearth is absolutely without limit. He is able and ready not merely to make a little go a great way, but so to increase and multiply the merest morsel, as to enable it to supply the wants of thousands; to make it sufficient for the needs of vast multitudes when to the sight of men, and even of Christian men, and of His Own nearest disciples,

there is only enough to provide for the wants of some two or three.

This then was a place of dearth; it was a desert place where there was no food, no means of support, nor any means of procuring any. Even though CHRIST had given a hint to His Apostles of their ability to give to the vast crowds a sufficiency for them to eat; even though they had only very lately experienced the might of His Almighty Word working in them, and had only very lately been working miracles in healing the sick in His Name, yet even they had not faith enough to act upon His direction; even they could not imagine that their five loaves could be so multiplied by their Master as to meet the wants of the five thousand people about them. Even they, with all their acquaintance with their Master's miracles which they had seen Him work, with all their experience of the miracles which His Divine power had only lately enabled themselves to work; even they could see no possibility by which the wants of all the people could be supplied. But all this was no bar to the immediate and full supply of all His people's needs. CHRIST was present then, He gave His blessing, and straightway there was enough, and more than enough, for all the wants of all the multitude.

And surely, brethren, this instance of His power and His mercy has much instruction for us all. There are still desert places in this life, to try the faith of His people. Nay, He still leads His people into desert places, in order to try their faith, as He did this multitude whose wants He miraculously supplied. There are desert places still for CHRIST'S people in the things concerning this life; for instance, a man often brings himself into need by following CHRIST'S commands; he

is in some business, in which he can increase his profits by some false dealing, by some deterioration of the article which he sells; by some substitution of a different material in the place of that which is professed to be dealt in; by some advantage taken of the ignorance or inadvertence of those with whom he deals; but if he be a man with the fear of GOD before his eyes, and with the certainty of an eternal judgment of all his actions in his heart, he will forego all these opportunities of profit, he will treat them as the temptations of Satan, and bid them all get them behind him; and so such a man will often bring himself into some straits and necessities as to his worldly sustenance; he will often find himself in a desert place by his very act of following CHRIST. CHRIST never guaranteed His followers from such difficulties and trials; nay, such are the very ordinary and usual effects and consequences of following Him. If a man will keep a good conscience, if he will in all his doings and dealings resolutely follow CHRIST, happen what may, he will usually fall into difficulties and straits, he will usually find himself in desert places where he sees no prospect of obtaining a sufficiency of food.

But should such a man, then, ever despair in such a case? should he ever fear for a moment that he will be left to want? No; surely this would be absolute and naked infidelity. Surely CHRIST is there with him in the desert place; surely He Who made the five loaves supply the needs of the five thousand that brought themselves into want by following Him, surely He will provide, even in the desert, sufficient for His servant who has faithfully followed Him; surely He will take care that such a one shall not suffer want. It is no figure of speech, it is not the slightest exaggeration to say that

CHRIST JESUS repeats this very miracle of the loaves perhaps even daily now. It is a most actual and literal fact, that when CHRIST's true servants have brought themselves into need and necessity by following Him they do receive supplies for their need, from just as unexpected and unhoped-for sources; just as much, in truth, from the miraculous gift of the ever-present CHRIST JESUS, as did this multitude about Him in the desert region of Bethsaida.

But then this is true also in respect of spiritual needs as well as bodily. There are still desert places—fearfully, almost hopelessly desert places in our hearts. They are still destitute of all support and spiritual food, they are still filled with waste and dreary places in which sinful and evil thoughts and imaginations reign and revel, into which Satan enters and leads them to ungodly vanities, to forgetfulness of GOD and of His love and of His Presence, to waywardness and self-will and worldliness, and to diverse hurtful lusts enough and more than enough to drown us in perdition.

But then surely, notwithstanding these howling desert places in our poor, wretched, helpless hearts—surely CHRIST is hard at hand, if only we be intent upon following Him—surely He is ready to supply all their needs, and to make His all-bounteous succours abound towards them, if only we be intent upon seeking the spiritual food we need, at His hands, and at His hands only.

Then, again, there are other spiritual deserts than our own individual hearts; there are large, dreary, desert places upon earth—yes, even in the regions occupied by CHRIST's Own Church, both here at home about ourselves and elsewhere in foreign lands—places where there is no supply of spiritual food, or scarcely any at

all, for the wants of multitudes of people. The sight of these poor helpless multitudes in such desert places, is a most fearful one indeed, without any food for their souls, without asking for any, without wanting any, without knowing or caring anything about such food; nay, disliking and shunning the very thought of any; putting away such thoughts from their hearts; living in a desert place, and determined to live deserted there.

Now the sight of such hapless, helpless perishing ones is one of the saddest sights to CHRIST'S disciples; and they often think as the Apostle did, that it is utterly hopeless to provide sufficiency of food for them here in the desert places of the earth. But surely even here, in such desert places as these, the same CHRIST is present with His disciples still. He can miraculously increase and multiply the scanty morsel of food so as abundantly to suffice even for all these lost ones' needs. In such a case the duty of CHRIST'S follower is to do his best and uttermost, to give out the supply of food which he has to give, even though that supply seems to him to be absolutely nothing at all, as knowing and believing and trusting that CHRIST is both able and willing to multiply such poor supply even far beyond all possible hope or expectation, and to make it abundantly sufficient for all His blessed purposes. So let us learn hence, that whatever be the desert place into which we be brought, and however utterly desert it may seem to us, if we be only intent upon following CHRIST; He is with us there, and ever ready there to make all His grace and mercy to abound towards us. Amen.

B. K.

SERMON XI.

THE DENIAL AND PENITENCE OF S. PETER.

S. Luke xxii. 61.

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."

All the events connected with the Passion of our Blessed Lord are invested with an interest peculiarly their own. The nearer we approach in the sacred narrative to that solemn hour, the more we feel that we are treading on holy ground; and every detail, however apparently trifling, acquires a significance from having happened in the closing scene of the earthly life of Jesus. We feel as if the very ground on which we are treading was consecrated by that Blood which dropped as the Saviour passed along the way of sorrows. The unfathomable wonders attending each mystery seem to deepen upon us, as we gaze upon them in holy thought; and we feel how every thorn that marred the Brow "fairer than the children of men," and each nail that pierced those Hands "stretched forward to a disobedient and gainsaying people," were in themselves a very Gospel of Love. Impressed, then, with such solemn thoughts, let us approach to the High Priest's house,

and follow with S. Peter "afar off." That brimming cup of suffering, concerning which our Blessed LORD had prayed that "it might pass from Him," had already been tasted by Him in His betrayal by Judas, and His subsequent apprehension. It had, however, yet unknown sorrows in reserve, which might try the strength and test the endurance even of the SON of GOD.

As an Apostle had played a woeful part amid the anguish of Gethsemane, so, too, there was to be found an Apostle who, by deliberate sin, should aggravate the cruel slights and bitter insults of the hall of judgment, and for the time cast in his lot with the persecutors of his LORD. This fall of S. Peter, taking place as it did in the very Presence of JESUS, conveys to the thoughtful Christian a very deep warning and a very salutary lesson. Fresh from the hearty protestation of fidelity, "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee," and the prophetic words of warning, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," S. Peter followed the multitude which conducted JESUS to the palace of the High Priest. What was the trial before which the courage of the dauntless Apostle quailed? "A certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him and said, This man was also with Him." This was the first temptation, and it proved too much for the constancy of him who had but now in hasty zeal unsheathed his sword in defence of his Divine Master. "And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not."[1] "And after a little while, another saw him and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not." Then, after "the space of an hour," follows the third and most awful denial, "I know not

[1] S. Luke xxii. 57.

the Man," accompanied with oaths and protestations in confirmation of the falsehood. "And the LORD turned, and looked upon Peter."

Such is the simple record of the Apostle's sin; and surely it is a sad tale of human weakness, which may well read a lesson of warning to the self-confident S. Peter, the foremost in words and deeds of that Apostolic band; S. Peter, to whom, for the bold confession of our LORD's divinity, the keys of the kingdom of heaven had been given; S. Peter, who was destined to be the Apostle of the Circumcision, and gather in many souls to the fold of His Blessed Master, to "feed the sheep" and "tend the lambs" of his LORD's flock, and finally to seal with his blood the truths which he had preached during his life,—S. Peter, to whom an enduring place has been given in the calendar of the Church of GOD, even he stood abashed at the saying of a little maid, "Thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth." Surely here is a warning, not to the openly sinful or obdurately impenitent, but to those who, amid the business and cares of this life, are seeking to cultivate a spirit of communion with GOD, but who nevertheless indulge a lurking feeling of self-confidence; and again, to those who know and accept intellectually the truths of the Faith, but are afraid openly to confess their belief in the face of an unsympathising world. To such let us, with GOD's help, apply the denial and the penitence of S. Peter.

I. The denial of S. Peter. The sin of the Apostle originated in self-confidence. A disposition to this is throughout the grand defect of his character, as it is exhibited to us in Holy Scripture. We might almost call it his "besetting sin." From it came that fiery

impetuosity, which in his later life was chastened by the Spirit of GOD, but still manifested itself in bold ventures of faith, and disinterested sacrifice of self. The sin of S. Peter arose, then, from the fact that he did not know his own weakness, and so did not seek strength from its only Fountain. It would have seemed almost impossible that a character, capable of so generous and chivalrous an affection as S. Peter's, should ever have committed so mean an act as the denial of his Master amid His sufferings. It might have been imagined that the hours of sweet and holy converse,—the crowding associations of tenderness which endeared Gennesaret, Olivet, and Bethany,—the remembrance of parables enshrining deep truths of grace, and of miracles illustrating the Divine compassions,—would have so possessed the Apostle's heart, as to make it impossible that his allegiance could for a moment falter. And yet he fell; and his fall was doubtless permitted by GOD, to teach him a bitter but needful lesson of humility. It was not, however, only to teach him, but was to preach to the children of GOD in all ages. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Is there no need for this warning now? Are there no ways in which Christians now may, like S. Peter, deny their LORD? Alas! there must be many who have not far to look for cases in which they have, more or less, been guilty of this, and who find in S. Peter's fall but the type of their own oft-repeated sin. How often, when the world in scoffing tones has seemed to say, "Thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth," have we by our actions answered, "I know not the Man!" It may be that some practice of devotion which we have formed—e. g., frequent retirement for prayer and meditation—has at-

tracted the animadversion of those around us. For a time, perhaps, we hold out; but at length, in deference to the opinions of others, we relinquish a habit formed by GOD'S grace, and deny JESUS. It may be that the bold enunciation of some truth, forgotten and hated by the world, arouses its most bitter antagonism. We try to soften down the asperities of our teaching, and to accommodate the truth of GOD to the taste of man. We may not consciously do this; it may be a gradual process; but be it gradual or sudden, the sin is the same. We deny JESUS of Nazareth. Or, again, we find all earnest lessons about the necessity of mortification, the need of bearing the Cross, and the high standard of sanctity set before us in the Bible, unpalatable to the majority; and so we endeavour to smooth down the rough corners of a religious life, and would fain strew the way of the Cross itself with flowers. We deny JESUS. Or, once again, when we hear the profane scoff and the ribald jest, or the servants of GOD ridiculed and His ordinances spoken of with lightness and contempt, we seem, by cowardly silence, to sanction all that is said; and so, like S. Peter, we practically deny JESUS. Brethren, are not these sins specially common to our times? Does not the heart of each of you recall some instance wherein you have, by thought, word, or act, denied your LORD? If so, I think you will find, on review, that the root of your sin has been lack of humility; and that for some little time before you fell your prayers were less earnest, your communions less fervent, your self-examinations less systematic, your guards over self less constant. Pride is the worm at the root of many a Christian heart. It is daily killing many souls, and winnowing them into the dreadful

garner of hell. If, then, we have ever sinned with Peter's sin, let us be sure that, like him, we seek GOD in earnest contrition; and to this end let us consider

II. S. Peter's repentance. In the midst of his ingratitude his LORD loved him still. "The LORD turned, and looked upon Peter." Who can tell the mingled love and sorrow of that look! It saved the soul of the Apostle. The Eye of JESUS, penetrating the inmost depths of his soul, saw in the heart the latent feelings of contrition but needing to be awakened. The fall had been but for a moment. It was a bitter but a needful lesson to human pride. The flood-gates of the heart were opened, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the whole soul of the Apostle gushed forth in penitence, and "he went out and wept bitterly."[1]

If S. Peter's sin was deep, his repentance was real and lasting. Like the Psalmist, "his sin was ever before him."[2] From that furnace of temptation, in which Satan had beguiled him, S. Peter came forth a changed man. Think you that he ever forgot that night, wherein, "as he stood and warmed himself," that Eye was turned upon him in silent reproach? Think you that he ever will forget through the endless ages of eternity the unutterable love of that Look, which rescued him from the fate of Judas, which arrested him in the very midst of his sin, and seemed to say in accents of reproachful sorrow, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"[3] How often must the thought of that remembered sin have stirred up the Apostle to labour more diligently in the Gospel, and to strive to prove by toils undergone for His Master's sake, the depth of his grief for the sad fall, which the earlier days of his

[1] S. Matt. xxvi. 75. [2] Ps. li. 3. [3] S. John xxi. 15.

Apostolate witnessed. Tradition has preserved to us an account of the severity which S. Peter all his life long exercised towards himself in "revenge" for the denial of his LORD. We have seen that there are many who sin with S. Peter's sin, but comparatively few sorrow at all with S. Peter's repentance. If he is the type of too many in transgression, is he the type of any in penitence?

Many there are, who in the turmoil and bustle of daily life, deny JESUS by what the world would call "little sins," who are ashamed of Him and His Word of Truth "in an adulterous and sinful generation," and yet can bear to think without sorrow of their numerous denials of Him. It is not, as was said before, to open and habitual sinners, who transgress with a high hand, that the sin of S. Peter conveys a peculiar warning. It speaks rather to those who are striving to serve GOD with a larger measure of devotion. You, who are frequent in your attendance on the services of the sanctuary, does not the LORD "turn and look" upon you? When you approach His Altar, can you not see His Eye turned in half-wistful gaze upon the inmost deeps of your soul, as "the candle of the LORD" searching out its dark corners, in which perchance some darling sin lurks unchecked, almost unknown? Be not deaf then to such repeated persuasions to increased love, and greater diligence in GOD's service. Remember no means of grace can absolutely secure you against sin without watchfulness. S. Peter came fresh from the first Eucharist, and the contemplation of the Agony of Gethsemane, and denied his LORD. Judas went direct from the very Presence of his Master, and betrayed Him. Think then that each time you come to Church, and more especially each time you approach to receive JE-

sus sacramentally, His loving Eye is fixed upon you, and let the tears of penitence flow forth for past sin. The fall of S. Peter taught him his own weakness, and can it be that we, with the remembrance of the many sins wherewith we have outraged the Majesty of Almighty God, can ever be tempted to trust in our own strength? Yet so it is. There is in the human heart a fearful disposition to self-confidence, and a jealous dislike of casting itself entirely on the mercy and love of God; and yet this must be done, if we would see the kingdom of heaven. No power of our own, no protestation of firm resolution—"Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will not I"—no declaration of readiness to serve God even to the death—"Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee"—none of these things, my brethren, can in any degree keep us pure from sin. Our only safety is on our knees. Sin assails the holiest as well as the most evil. The only difference is that in its assaults on the former it assumes a more subtle form. They are not tempted perhaps to the grosser and more sensual sins, but they are peculiarly liable to the danger of denying Christ in the ordinary round of their daily life. To some their very diffidence and humble opinion of self is a snare. Let all then take good heed to themselves, and remember that every sin deliberately committed is a denial of Christ, and a perjuring of themselves before God; a denial of Christ, because they say by their actions that they are not His followers; a perjuring of themselves, because they are doing those very works of the devil, which in their Baptism they promised to renounce. Does not the heart of each of us, dear brethren, convince us of such denials of Christ?

If it be so, let us sorrow after a godly sort, and seek reconciliation through the precious Blood of JESUS, Which can cleanse from every transgression. If on the other hand we have by GOD's mercy been kept from deep transgression, let us "rejoice with trembling," nor deem ourselves safe where even an Apostle fell.

Oh! may the LORD "turn and look" upon us! May He, Who trod the way of sorrows alone for our sake, turn His lightning glance of love upon our hearts, and not upon ours only, but on the hearts of all sinners unconverted to Him, and shoot upon them a gleam of conviction! Be assured that unless that Eye is fixed upon us in love here, we shall have to meet its stern glance hereafter amid the terrors of the Judgment Day. How, dear brethren, shall we face Him Who has done everything for us, Who suffered untold sorrows in the mysteries of His Passion, when we see Him as our Judge, and behold those Wounds which He bore for us, shining amid the glories of His Risen Body? Oh! how will those, who have dared to deny the LORD of Glory, then hide their faces and call on the mountains to cover them, as they "look on Him Whom they pierced," and feel the fearful words fulfilled in their own case, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His FATHER with the holy Angels."[1] GOD grant that we may never experience the eternal shame of being disowned by CHRIST, but that we may so confess Him here on earth, that to each soul of us at last it may be said, "Thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth."[2]

W. B.

[1] S. Luke viii. 38. [2] S. Mark xiv. 67.

SERMON XII.

THE OFFICE AND WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

S. JOHN XIV. 18.

"I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS."

HE is gone—He is gone up—He has ascended up into Heaven. He had led out His disciples, His Apostles, His friends, the holy women, as far as Bethany. With them He had climbed the hill, with them He had talked, had spoken to the last. But now He is no more with them. All eyes had been earnestly fastened upon Him. They watched the moving of those gracious lips. They well know that GOD is on this day about to take away their Great Head and Master from them. They therefore all the more eagerly hang upon His words. They are unwilling for a moment to lose the sight of Him. But He has told them (they know) the truth. It is expedient for them that He should go away. For them rather than for Himself there is a needs be that this should take place. It is for them and for His Church He is caring and thinking of, and not of Himself. But for them He would yet forego this triumph. This they are all assured of. And lo! He lifted up His

Hands and blessed them, and while He blessed, in the act of blessing them, He does not so much *leave* them, as that for awhile He is *parted* from them. A cloud has received Him out of their sight.

And yet, after all, gone up He is, and had He not said, I will not leave you comfortless? But could they be otherwise than comfortless? They were now surely to see Him no more. He their LORD and Master (they might well feel) was being taken from them. He for Whose sake they had forsaken all, as one had said, was now forsaking them. He for Whose sake they had been content to bear His reproach, to be called Galileans, to be outcasts, and had in derision. And well: so long as He was with them, for He had the words of eternal life, and to whom else should they go? But was He now to leave them? Leave them, too, in the midst of His and their enemies: amid the very men who had put Him to death; who, as they thought, had triumphantly proved their Master and Teacher to be an impostor, and not fit so much as to live. What kind of a life would they not have to endure? to be put out of the synagogue, and not to have Him in its stead; to be looked upon as credulous fools, and the followers of a malefactor. And all this without Him, without His Presence, without His Voice, without His miracles, without His encouragement. What kind of comfort could they have? Without Thee (they might well say) we can do nothing, we are helpless and are appointed as sheep unto the slaughter, and for Thy sake we shall be killed all the day long. For what were they among so many? Their enemies were many in number and mighty. There were the Romans, the rulers and governors, the chief priests and Pharisees, the greatest of

their own people. And what were they in themselves but few in number, the poorest of the poor, fishermen, publicans, and women? What would be the end of them? What hope could they have that they should meet with a happier lot and end than that of their Master? If He who had been so good to the people, doing among them such works as none other man did, in Whom verily had been seen the Divine Goodness Itself, had yet been by wicked hands crucified and slain, what might not they expect from a blind, bigoted, enraged, frantic people, were they to proclaim that they had seen Him alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, or were to affirm that that same JESUS had ascended up into heaven to sit at the Right Hand of the Most High? It could never be: comfortless, comfortless must be their lot. Desponding, disheartened, all they could look forward to would be that they might die in peace, and every day to say with the Prophet, "Let us die, for we are not better than our fathers."

What to them was it that He had gone up with a merry noise? that the angels had joyfully received Him back again into the realms of glory, that exulting in His return they had bidden the gates of heaven barred to man by the Fall, be unbarred to receive the Son of Man to sit on the throne of His FATHER, that there all the whole company of heaven might worship Him, falling down before the LORD their Maker? What would all this be to them below, bound to earth as they were? or how could they echo back their triumphant songs while they were deprived of their Head, and were mourning His loss, alone in the midst of their enemies? He might be in heaven and the angels might well rejoice; but they were on earth, and could do nought but

sit on the ground, comfortless and refusing to be comforted because He was not.

These are the thoughts of unbelieving selfishness. But the thoughts of the disciples were far from such. Truth had spoken: Do not think that I am deserting, though I leave you; I will not leave you comfortless, I will not leave you without a Comforter. If I go away I will send Him unto you, and He shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth. Therefore wait for the promise of the FATHER, which, said He, ye have heard of Me.

In silence they received His word. Had He not spoken and should He not do it? In faith they had embraced the promise not now very far off. Submissively they returned to Jerusalem to wait for the fulfilment of the promise, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing GOD. He Who had descended from heaven and had become Man, would be true to His word, though it seemed otherwise. He Who for their sake had suffered and died would never leave them comfortless, seeing that He had risen again. His enemies, those who would not have Him to reign over them, He might leave comfortless, and, if impenitent, hopelessly in their sins. But He Who was the Son of Man, even though ascended into heaven, would certainly not thus leave them whom He had chosen, who had not chosen Him, but had been chosen by Him as His friends. In His triumphant ascension He could not forget or be unmindful of the comfort of them who had continued with Him during His sore travail in the flesh, in the days of His sojourning, and manifold temptations. It was not in the nature of the Divine Compassion thus to be forgetful of His friends on earth. And though it

were expedient for them that He should leave them Himself, as far as His visible Presence in the flesh were concerned, as doubtless it was, yet all the more on that account He would not leave them comfortless, but would send them the promise of the FATHER. He knew (ah! far better than did they) the cruel mockings and scourgings, the stripes and imprisonments that awaited them. He saw how they would be persecuted from city to city, hounded to death, that brother would rise up against brother, and sister against sister, father against the children, and the children against the parents, and should cause them to be put to death. He knew how near was the time when to kill them would be thought by some men to be doing a service acceptable to GOD. And so the words, Let not your hearts be troubled. I, your LORD and GOD have overcome the world and have received all power in heaven and in earth, therefore be of good cheer, I will not leave you comfortless. He well knew that, added to the attacks and persecutions of men, they would have to contend not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and the wickedness of spirits in high places; that the Prince of the power of the air would array all his forces against them; that each one of them was to be a captain to challenge Satan in his own seats, and conquer him in his strongest of strongholds; that they were to go forth into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem, as warriors against the evil one and all the powers of darkness, to rescue nations and kingdoms from his clutches, to give deliverance to the captives, and to allot them a place of freedom among the children and servants of GOD.

Could they do this of themselves? Had any such a

spirit been seen at all in them? However willing, indeed, in spirit, what had they been proved to be in the day of adversity when the storm fell upon them? What but weakness itself. Cowardly shrinkings from contempt; brave words, and shameful denials; flight at the very sight of a band of armed men; hateful oaths and forswearings at the taunts of a serving-maiden. And therefore that this dishonour might not be brought upon His Name; that His strength might be manifested in their weakness, He had said, I will not leave you comfortless. He shall come Who shall make you strong and enable you to speak the Word with boldness, Who will give you such words that your adversaries will be able neither to gainsay nor resist. Powerless they might be without Him, but with His grace they should do all things. In the midst of fightings without and fears within; in the presence of kings and rulers, before judges and magistrates, at the sight of racks and tortures, with SS. Andrew and Peter, nailed like Himself to the Cross, with S. John in the cauldron of oil, by the side of the headsman with S. James, He would remember His promise, and comfortless they should be not. In the midst of these fiery trials, He would make them more than conquerors; they should joy in tribulations. For He would cause them to rejoice in suffering shame, and reckon it all joy the being counted worthy to suffer aught for the sake of that Name which was called upon by them. And this was to be no other way but by the fulfilment of His word, "I will not leave you comfortless."

Much more, however, than this was shadowed forth under these words. Herein were to be satisfied all the promises made unto the Fathers, from the first promise

made to our great mother Eve at the Fall down to the prophecy of Zacharias that GOD had visited and redeemed His people, to perform the oath which He had sworn to Abraham that his children should henceforth serve Him *without fear* in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of their life. In faith had Abraham and the Patriarchs served GOD; in faith had pious judges and kings done their work in their generation; in faith had the prophets spoken of a deliverer Who was to come, and searched into the manner of the fulfilment of the promise; in faith had the children of Israel, in the most faithless times, that is, those who were Israelites indeed—trusted to this promise to come. But come it had not in their time. Year followed year, king followed king, prophet followed prophet; cities were built, cities were destroyed; one generation after another was gathered to their fathers, was laid in the dust and the Promised Seed was not given. Every man did not yet know the LORD from the least unto the greatest. The fountain for sin and all uncleanness had yet to be discovered. Wine and milk without money and without price, where were they to be had? The people sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron, being all their life through *fear of death* subject to bondage. These all died in faith, *not* having received the promise. It was only as yet a prophecy that GOD would one day pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, upon the servants and the handmaidens. The time had not yet arrived when it could be truly said: This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. It was a thing, however, which all who served GOD looked for, longed for, expected. The royal prophet sung in sweet strains of the glorious time to come;

others foretold that come it certainly would. "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and all flesh shall see the salvation of GOD:" in that day when He would make a new covenant with them, "saying, I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." And again: "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty." And now as the Promise drew nearer, had not our LORD Himself said, that whosoever should believe on Him, out of his belly should flow rivers of living waters? This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because that JESUS Himself was not yet glorified. But He thereby testified to the same thing as in the text, "I will not leave you comfortless." To this He had drawn the mind of the woman of Samaria, when He said, Whosoever shall drink of the waters that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. This spake He also of the Spirit, of Whose living waters all that believed should afterwards be made to drink. Comfortable and refreshing words to the parched and weary in soul. And now the time was at hand when He was to leave them, but the Comforter was to come unto them. And therefore He spake unto His disciples—and through them to the Church to the end of the world, and to us who are alive as it is this day—these consolatory words. These

gracious words still sound in our ears. Though I leave you—as indeed I do—yet nevertheless—I will not leave you comfortless.

Pitiable indeed and pitied by all men is the state of children when bereaved of their parents. None other call out the pity and sympathy of our common humanity as do destitute orphans. To whose care can they be entrusted with safety, but to His Who is the Father of the fatherless? In such a pitiable state then were the disciples, when the LORD was withdrawn from them, when He had to leave them. He their friend, He Who had fed them with the Bread of heaven, Who had sustained them with the word of GOD; He Who like a Father had laid down His life for the children, Who had upheld them on the sea, had borne with their dulness and encouraged the beginnings of their faith; Who, since the day that He had chosen them had been ever at hand; and as a father pitieth his own children so had He been pitiful and tender towards them. He, then, was to be taken from them. They were now to be robbed of His Presence: orphaned of the Light of His countenance. But was it to be so for long? No; I will not leave you orphans; for this is the first meaning of the Greek. As if He had said, I know you will feel your own deprivation—that you will seem comfortless without Me, helpless orphans in the midst of a cold, hard, unfriendly, unbelieving world, but you shall not be left thus in orphanhood. He shall come Who shall abide with you for ever. This, then, was to be the result of the Promise of the FATHER that man who had lost his true sonship by the Fall should be forgiven; that man in whom by sin had been interrupted that filial intercourse which naturally takes place between

GOD and His offspring, should be restored to favour and regain his inheritance. Too long had this holy intercommunion been broken down and destroyed by the malice of Satan and the wilfulness of man. Long had the world groaned to be restored to vital union with its Great Parent. But it could not be effected till sin had been condemned in the flesh, till a satisfaction had been made, till GOD'S justice was appeased with a worthy offering. But this had now taken place. Henceforth the gates of heaven were to be open to all believers. Now was a direct communication to be established between the heart of man and the heart of the Great GOD. And how was this? I will not leave you, said our Blessed LORD, I will not leave you orphans. That is, the Comforter, Who is the HOLY GHOST, shall come unto you, Whom the FATHER shall send. He shall send Him to you Who is My FATHER and your FATHER. Ye then shall receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby to cry, Abba, FATHER.

This was to be the Gift. Certainly they were not to be left orphans. For how could they be orphans who had sent into their hearts the Spirit of the SON, crying, Abba, FATHER? A new spirit was to be given them, a new creation was to take place in them; they were to be sons, sons by adoption, but not the less sons. There would be no doubt of this, seeing that they should have given them the HOLY GHOST Himself, certifying to their spirits that they had a FATHER, by enabling them to utter that word, that filial word, Abba, FATHER, and thereby testifying to them that they were themselves His children, His sons; and if sons, then heirs, heirs of GOD and joint heirs with CHRIST; their inheritance nothing short of the kingdom of heaven.

And together with this sonship, with this ceasing to be orphans, how much more was given! It was to be an infusion of Divine grace, a revelation to them in their innermost heart of GOD reconciled to them as a FATHER in JESUS CHRIST. They were, in having the earnest of the Spirit given them, to enjoy a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven; they were to rejoice in the hope of the glory of GOD; to have a present Comforter ever with them, an unction which should make them know GOD, and should teach them all things, even the deep things of GOD. He should write the commandments in their minds and in the fleshly tables of their hearts, and cause them to die to sin by giving them the new birth unto righteousness. He should shed abroad the Divine charity in their hearts, giving them a will and power to do that which by their former natural destitute state they were wholly unable to do.

And thus it was, beloved, that according to our LORD'S most true promise, His words were fulfilled in the very letter, as well likewise as in the spirit. They found out in their own experience that they were not the vain words of comfort such as man often gives to another to soften down the hardship of an unavoidable evil. But the truth was tested in the persons of those whom he addressed, and they in their trials and tribulations, which for the Gospel's sake they underwent, were never left orphans or comfortless. For this reason, therefore, being full of faith, the Apostles and other disciples, far from sorrowing, rejoiced with exceeding great joy that their LORD was exalted to His Own rightful place at the Right Hand of GOD. He had gone, they knew, as their forerunner, to prepare a place for them, that in the end where He was there they might be also.

And now, brethren, as to how this subject concerns ourselves, concerns faithful Catholics who believe that CHRIST has ascended into heaven; for to His Church to the end of time does He say, "I will not leave you comfortless." In one respect we are not like the disciples who attended Him as He went up. The Comforter had not then been given. Pentecost had not yet fully come. Therefore we ought to be better able than they to rejoice that the Son of Man is glorified and seated on the Right Hand of GOD. They by faith waited for the promise, waited for the HOLY GHOST, waited for what we (unless it be not so by our own misdeeds) have in ourselves, namely, the first fruits of the Spirit,—nay, the Spirit Himself crying out in our hearts, Abba, FATHER. We therefore cannot be said to be comfortless, that is, without the Comforter, and some measure at least of His grace. We are not left orphans when we have as children the GOD of heaven for our FATHER. But is this the case with all who hear this? Does the thought that your risen LORD has ascended, and has sent down upon you the Spirit of the FATHER, fill your hearts with joy, or are there any that are still left comfortless? This cannot be of GOD Who is willing to give His HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask Him. The cause must be sought for in yourselves. The reason men cannot and do not draw near to GOD in prayer with the child-like confidence of a human child to a human parent, is because they love darkness rather than light; unwilling, it may be, to part with sin, to break off from some darling yet sinful affection. And if so, the HOLY GHOST cannot come into you, and you must still be left comfortless. Or it may be there are others, who are content so long as things go on prosperously

with them, and have their minds satisfied with the daily round of business and their worldly occupation. Others again are still grovelling in fleshly and carnal enjoyments, and have no desires above the beasts that perish. Is it that the business, or pleasure, or the pursuit of honour and ambition, or that eating, and drinking, and sleeping, take up the greatest portion of your thoughts? Nay, my brethren, it is not for such that CHRIST has gone up into heaven to give them the HOLY SPIRIT. No: the HOLY SPIRIT is given to draw men off from being engrossed in such pursuits. To be carnally minded is death: and men of this character are living in a state of death-like stupor. Rouse up, ye careless ones; think what may be yours! The Comforter is come to make men the children of a heavenly FATHER, citizens of a city which is above, whose builder and maker is GOD.

Blessed, thrice blessed are they who feel within themselves the workings of that HOLY SPIRIT, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things: greatly does it kindle their love towards GOD, and cause them to bless His Name that they have not been left comfortless. To what purpose are we called Christians, to what purpose do we believe that CHRIST has ascended into heaven, that He has obtained gifts for men, if we are not possessed with the Spirit of CHRIST? Why, we are none of His, and must be yet in our sins. At best, we are without the indwelling of the Comforter. So that our religion is a poor, weak, wavering thing after all. We have no boldness, no power to confess CHRIST before men; nothing of that great Divine charity which makes us count as nought everything but the righteousness of CHRIST; nothing of that

spirit which animated the Apostles, and made them gladly to take up the cross, glad to follow in the steps of a crucified Redeemer. If our religion thus be wanting and thus heartless, if our first thoughts are for ourselves and for the world, and our second for GOD and heaven, it is, beloved, because we are without the Comforter, have lost the Spirit of the FATHER, and are without the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding. Comfortless! orphans indeed! Let not then a few fervent desires or ardent feelings content you, which come and go and leave us powerless in the hour of trial and in the time of temptation. A mere feeling will never enable a man to live as the child of GOD. He must have the Abiding Comforter established in him. Rather therefore should we, while with the Apostles we rejoice in the Ascension of our LORD, with them also continue in prayer and supplication, that we too may receive the promise of the FATHER.

Raising our minds and thoughts above earth, and sending the breathings of our hearts far beyond the skies, passing from all these, and not resting till in spirit we find ourselves before the throne of grace,—and there—there destitute, comfortless, orphans, what shall be our prayer? Be it that of the Apostles, of the holy women, of the Holy Church throughout the world at this time: O GOD, the King of Glory, Who hast exalted Thine only SON with great triumph into Thy kingdom in heaven, leave us not comfortless. Leave us not, who are here toiling below, liable to so many temptations, subject to so many infirmities; leave us not to our sins, nor to our own weaknesses. Thou seest the agony of our hearts, the continual strife we are in, the cleaving of our souls to the dust, the helplessness of our

orphanhood, therefore leave us not comfortless, but send Thy HOLY GHOST to comfort us, to exalt us in heart and mind to the same place whither our SAVIOUR CHRIST is gone before, that there with Him, even while here on earth, we may be made continually to dwell, and one day to have our bodies quickened and raised to reign with Him in glory. Amen.

R. C.

SERMON XIII.

THE SIN OF SCHISM.[1]

2 Cor. vi. 1.

"We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

The Collect for this day, again referring to Christ's first coming in the flesh and to His second coming to judgment, reminds us that, as there was a special messenger, S. John Baptist, to prepare the way for the one, so likewise did our Blessed Saviour, before He left the earth, appoint certain persons, to whom He entrusted the work of making preparation for His Second Advent, and provided that such witnesses, to warn and reclaim those who are careless or forgetful of His return, should never fail; promising to recognise their commission and bless their labours by the assurance, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." These are they whom S. Paul, in the Epistle for the day, calls "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God," and for whose faithfulness in the discharge of their duties, as all are individually con-

[1] For the Ember Week in December.

cerned, so all are directed to pray that they may so prepare and make ready CHRIST'S way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at His Second Coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in His sight. But remember, brethren, if you desire their work and labour of love "to be effectual to this end, you must be workers together with them;" for unless you are "followers of them as they are of CHRIST," they can never be "ministers to you for good."

The Collect, therefore, and the prayer which you have offered up for those on whom "the Bishops and Pastors of GOD'S flock" are about to lay their hands in ordination, while they are intercessions for GOD to "bestow His grace and heavenly benediction" on all "who shall be ordained to any holy function," are equally petitions that those committed to their charge may reverently hear and obey those whom the HOLY GHOST shall thus make overseers to feed the Church of GOD. But they are more than this: they are, by necessary implication, professions on the part of those who utter them of a resolution not to be "hinderers of GOD'S Word," or partakers of them that are such. So that, if you have used these prayers in sincerity and truth, as I would hope and believe; you have virtually declared yourselves ready, by GOD'S grace assisting you, to follow the Apostolic precept, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief." At least it must be believed, that those who have so lately joined in such prayers and professed such desires, would not wish to be left unwarned by their ministers of mistaken

opinions or practices, which *must* prove effectual hindrances to their edification and Christian perfection.

In this confidence, brethren, a text has been selected which is at once applicable to the subject, which the Church by her services seems to prescribe for our consideration to-day, and which will also afford an opportunity of speaking very plainly of a sinful custom which is fearfully prevalent in the present days—I allude to the practice of professed members of the Church attending the meeting-houses of those who have separated from her communion and ministers; a practice which, so far from being harmless, is in GOD'S written word shown to be, in those who are guilty of such error, a virtual renunciation of CHRIST, and a cancelling of their part in that covenant wherein they promised to be soldiers and servants of CHRIST alone. These may seem unwarrantable assertions to those who have been accustomed to think it not only allowable, but even good and righteous, to join in the worship of any body of professing Christians, wherever assembled; but it will presently be pointed out that they who do such things have been mistaken in this matter,—conscientiously deceived, it may be, but still on that account the act is not less sinful, nor they less answerable for it, which I will endeavour to prove is not the mere private opinion of any man, but the plain sentence of those Scriptures of GOD'S truth, which can neither be changed to suit the caprice or justify the mistakes of individuals, nor its condemnation cancelled because the world in general refuses to receive them, except in a sense so limited, as to exclude, if not justify, their own transgressions of the strict letter of GOD'S law. But we must bear in mind that GOD'S revealed will, not *man's estimate* of lawful and

unlawful, of essential and non-essential, will be the test by which, in the Last Great Day, CHRIST will "discern between the righteous and the wicked,"—between him "that hath served GOD, and him that served Him not;" and therefore by that same standard must we judge between right and wrong *now*, if we would be found blameless and irreproachable in His sight then.

And here, before entering more fully on the examination of the text, it may be well to remark, that when S. Paul says, "We, as workers together with CHRIST," he alludes to himself and those who, by laying on of Apostolic hands, had been appointed elders and ministers in the Church at Corinth, *and to no others;* and of all who cannot show their authority *now*, through the Bishops who are the true successors of the Apostles, we have no warrant for admitting their claim to be CHRIST'S ministers at all, but rather, on His authority, must we count them false prophets, of whom we must beware; for of them He says plainly, "Verily I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." And on this rule of the SAVIOUR the Church in all ages, from the beginning to the present day, has determined that none but those who are duly ordained should be recognised as true and lawful ambassadors of CHRIST; which our Church also in her Twenty-third Article thus plainly affirms, "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same;" adding immediately afterwards, "and those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public autho-

rity given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the LORD'S vineyard;" words which every one who has studied her Prayer Book and Canons well knows were never intended to apply, nor can be applied to any but those for whom we have this day prayed as "the Bishops and Pastors of GOD'S flock." Those, then, thus constituted and ordained,—and they alone,—are included by the word "we" in the ministerial rank and order; and with this restriction we will now proceed to inquire—

1. In what sense S. Paul calls them "workers together with CHRIST?"

2. What were the wrong practices in reference to which he warns of a danger, lest the grace of GOD should be received in vain?

I. First, then, the Apostle seems to preface the warnings and rebukes contained in the subsequent part of this chapter, by asserting the authority with which he was invested, in virtue of which he claims their attention and respect. In the former chapter he had declared, "All things are of GOD, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by JESUS CHRIST, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;" adding, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for CHRIST, as though GOD did beseech you by us: we pray you in CHRIST'S stead, be ye reconciled unto GOD." In short, he first asserts GOD'S absolute right to do and to order what He pleased with respect to those whom He had purchased and reconciled with His Own Blood, and then declares that He had seen fit to place certain persons in His Church,—of whom he, S. Paul, was one,—as His messengers and ambassadors, authorised to act in His stead, and to persuade men to accept the terms of His covenant of grace and

peace, provided for their restoration to favour, and the only means of placing them in a position to receive the salvation secured and sealed to them in and by the Blood of CHRIST. So then the gift of life being entirely of GOD'S free grace and good will, reason alone would tell us that none can prescribe other conditions than He has laid down, nor any of their own will assume the office of treating with man concerning it.

In calling upon men to repent and submit to the yoke of CHRIST, the Apostle therefore professes that himself and his brethren in the ministry acted as "workers together with CHRIST,"—i. e., doing His work, and sanctioned by His authority and commission. *They* were *then*—and we, who have been made partakers of the fellowship of their ministry, are still—carrying on that work which CHRIST began. He came from heaven the Messenger of the Covenant of Reconciliation. By Him GOD made known His good pleasure to perform certain promises, provided mankind would comply with the conditions on which He made the fulfilment of His part of the covenant dependent: these were—faith, repentance, and strict obedience. But when CHRIST left the world, as to His bodily Presence, He authorised the Apostles to continue the same offers of peace, and to treat with men in the same manner as He had Himself done. "As the FATHER," said He, just before His Ascension, "sent Me, so send I you,"—i. e., to execute the same commission, and with the same power to authorise others after them to speak and act in His Name.

Accordingly we find S. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians declaring the persons so commissioned to have been appointed by CHRIST Himself, saying, "He,"

that is, CHRIST, "gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST," which is His Church. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we again find him asserting that such duly-ordained elders of the Church "worked the work of the LORD as he himself did." (xvi. 10.) And in his Second Epistle to S. Timothy he directs him to appoint others who should "feed the flock of CHRIST," and who should be required to "exhort and rebuke with all authority," and specially warn them against those who should disturb the peace of the Church. For, he adds, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things thou shalt be a good minister of JESUS CHRIST, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

Such, likewise, is now our duty. We are appointed to watch over, to warn and to instruct with the words of eternal life, the members of CHRIST's Church. And as *He* came to gather together all in one, that there might be one fold under one Shepherd, so by "one Baptism" *we* are to graft all into "One Body." By teaching "one Faith" to guard them from being "tossed about by every wind of doctrine"—by the same system of discipline to make them obedient servants of "one LORD,"—by administering the same Sacraments and ordinances of religion, to unite all together as worshippers of the same GOD and FATHER of all, glorifying Him "with one heart and one mouth," "till all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST." Thus provision is

made that CHRIST, i.e., His Church be not divided, nor His professed disciples come short of the benefits she is empowered to convey, through separating themselves from her—breaking the unity of the Spirit by not continuing in the bond of that peace "to the which," as S. Paul reminds the Colossians, "are all called in One Body."

II. But, secondly, we will now inquire what was the occasion of the Apostle's alarm and entreaty to the Corinthians that they would take heed that they received not the grace of GOD in vain. Now in a general way men thus sin against their souls when they do not receive blessings with thankfulness of heart; or when they wilfully neglect the means of grace placed within their reach as all do who absent themselves without just cause from the services of the sanctuary, not on Sundays only, but whenever opportunities of public worship are afforded them. But by the grace of GOD, spoken of in my text, is especially meant the favour shown to the Corinthians by their being gathered into the Church of CHRIST, whose privileges, Sacraments, ordinances, and ministers were so many talents entrusted to them which, if not rightly used, the Apostle reminds them, would prove ineffectual to the end for which they were given. And it is clear he had some immediate cause for fearing such a coming short in their case. For from the tenour of the whole chapter and the earnestness with which he exculpates himself from any possible charge of blameworthiness, he is evidently not forewarning them of a danger which might probably come upon them at any *future period*; but finding fault with some particular irregularity which they had *already* been guilty of, and which made him dread lest he should have

laboured in vain in their behalf. The Church which had but recently been founded at Corinth was beset by gross idolatry and superstition, which proved a snare and occasion of falling to those not yet established and settled in the faith, and to the Apostle was a source of much uneasiness. "I am jealous over you," he writes, "with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to CHRIST. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in CHRIST." Hence his first Epistle to them abounds with rules for their conduct under the circumstances in which they were placed. For instance, in the sixth chapter he forbids Christians to "go to law with their brethren before unbelievers," i.e., the heathen magistrates. In the tenth chapter, we find directions concerning their unavoidable intercourse with the heathen. "If any man of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake; conscience I say, not thine own, but of the other," i.e., lest he be induced to think that idolatry was not sinful or hateful to GOD, and so be confirmed in his unbelief by seeing a professed disciple act as though his false worship was a matter of indifference. But further, from the eighth chapter, it appears that some of the Christians had been guilty of attending the heathen worship, of the fearful consequences of which the Apostle thus warns them: "Take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak, for if

any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols, and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom CHRIST died?" And then he adds the true character of such licentiousness of practice in these awful words: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against CHRIST."

Now these professed Christians do not seem to have intentionally renounced the religion of CHRIST, nor wholly to have severed themselves from the fellowship of His Church, but simply to have thought themselves at liberty to frequent the idol temples as well as their own places of assembling themselves together. Yet S. Paul tells them that the two things cannot exist together and they continue CHRIST's disciples. "Ye cannot," he writes in the tenth chapter, "drink the cup of the LORD and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the LORD's table and the table of devils." This, then, was the evil practice to which S. Paul refers in the text with deep anxiety, lest they who persisted in it should receive the grace of GOD in vain; and that such was his intended allusion and his judgment that laxity in this respect, coupled with too free intercourse with their heathen countrymen, amounted to a virtual renunciation of CHRIST, and a total frustration of GOD's gracious design in calling them into the light of His Gospel, is shown by what follows in the same chapter: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath CHRIST with Belial? or what part hath

he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing."

Now, with some slight modifications to adapt them to our own times and altered circumstances, each one of these Apostolic rules is applicable to, and binding upon us of the present day, quite as much as to the Corinthian Christians. We, like them, are surrounded by those, who, according to the plain meaning of GOD's law, are equally idolaters and heathen in His sight, and the same rule of conduct is laid down for us. To pray for them, and to render them all the offices of true Christian charity, is our undoubted duty. But we are forbidden to choose them as friends and associates, for it is thus written, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." We are forbidden, both as we love our own souls and the souls of others, to join in their acts of unauthorised worship, lest thus bidding them GOD speed ourselves become partakers of their sin, or lest others of weak conscience be encouraged to offend by our example.

But here it may be said that the warnings of S. Paul concerning the heathen cannot apply to the various sects of professing Christians by whom we are surrounded, and our poor and unlearned brethren seduced into schism: that there is a wide difference between those who worshipped false gods and those who worshipped the true GOD in a false way. Yet whatever be the distinction, it is not so great as may be supposed. The sin is the same in kind. Those who persist in worshipping GOD only in their own way, following their own devices instead of His ordinances, virtually become

idolaters, for of such GOD declares by the mouth of His Prophets, "they have set up their idols in their hearts." And our blessed SAVIOUR says of all who reject the authority of His living and abiding witness in this world: "If he refuse to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

Again, it may be asked, What harm can accrue to any from joining with those who believe in CHRIST? But the question remains, Do they really believe? For surely they cannot stand the test of our Blessed LORD'S Own simple rule for discerning them that are His. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." For some wholly, others in part, reject His holy sacraments. Nor can they who first break CHRIST'S law of unity, by dividing His Church, and then the law of charity, by reviling her as the betrayer of souls, be verily and indeed believers in Him Who said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another," and Who commanded all to abide in Him. Or how can they who set at nought the Apostles and ministers of CHRIST'S appointment, hold that He spake truly when He said of all such: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me?" And yet some, perhaps, will still argue that at least they worship the same GOD as ourselves, though in a different manner, and in another place. But the real question is, will GOD acknowledge their self-willed worship, as worshipping Him? And it seems clear that He will not, for the HOLY GHOST declares by the mouth of S. Paul: "They that are such serve not the LORD JESUS CHRIST, but their own belly." Now surely, these are most awful considerations. Well may we "not be high-

minded but fear," when we see Satan deceiving and beguiling into sin many who wish to do right, and causing religion itself to become the very rock upon which many, whom we cannot doubt are earnest and sincere, "make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience." But it is not for us to condemn or to bring railing accusations. "Them that are without GOD judgeth," but you that are within, it is our duty to warn, lest you fall away from your stedfastness, and come into the like condemnation. It is our duty to call upon you, as the Apostle did to the Corinthians: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing," lest haply in that day when all must render account of privileges and mercies valued or neglected, you may be found to have received the grace of GOD in vain.

Finally, brethren, think on these things; and, while by constant self-examination you endeavour to detect, and by self-discipline to cast away all sinful habits or dispositions which might hinder the effectual working of GOD's grace, see that you seek that grace in those ordinances and sacraments which He has appointed in His Church alone as channels of spiritual strength. In her keeping are provided all needful and sufficient means and opportunities of laying hold upon life eternal. Baptized in the Name of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, we are then made members of GOD, and placed in a state of salvation. GOD is in the midst of the spiritual Sion to bless her faithful children, and through *her*, "the fulness of Him Who filleth all things" ministers to them the True Bread from Heaven, and the cleansing waters of salvation, whereby alone we grow up into CHRIST, Who is "the Head of the Church and the SAVIOUR of the

Body." There, then, it is that GOD marks out the narrow way which will lead us to Himself, for the Church is "none other than the house of GOD and the gate of heaven." Take heed therefore that you continue stedfast unto the end. Leave her worship, not even occasionally, to search for some false but promised comfort, some fancied edification among those who are separated from her. For rest assured that you can find neither with those of whom it is written: "They have sown the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind"—And again: "They have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters, and have hewed out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold no water." Yea, it is of the one Catholic Church alone that Almighty GOD declares, "In Mine holy mountain I will accept them, and there will I require your offerings." It is only those that are "planted in the house of the LORD," who can "flourish in the courts of our GOD;" as it is written in the Psalms: "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts, and be satisfied with the goodness of Thine house, even of Thine holy temple."—Be satisfied! Yea: even with real spiritual blessings; foretastes *now* of that fulness of joy which shall be ours *hereafter*, when all divisions shall be healed, in the Church triumphant in heaven.

C. L.

SERMON XIV.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

ACTS I. 7, 8.

"AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW THE TIMES OR THE SEASONS, WHICH THE FATHER HATH PUT IN HIS OWN POWER. BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER, AFTER THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU: AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDÆA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH."[1]

THESE were the *very last words* which CHRIST uttered upon earth; unless indeed He *spake* anything when "He lifted up His hands and blessed" His disciples; but Holy Scripture does not mention that He did.

The last words of some dear friend who is leaving us, though but for a little while, are not to us like his common words. He tries, perhaps, to say some special words to us; but if he fails, as commonly he does, his simplest speech is, we persuade ourselves, full of meaning.

The parting words of one whom we love, and who is leaving us for some distant land, never again, it may be, to be seen by us in this life, are precious words. How do we hang upon them, dwell upon them, repeat them to ourselves, think over them again and again.

The dying words of father, mother, husband, wife,

[1] Preached in All Saints', Margaret Street, May 20, 1855.

parent, child, relation, friend,—what loving heart knows not how to value. When the soul is struggling to escape from its earthly tabernacle that it may return to Him Who gave it—the whispers, nay, even the looks, of that trying hour move us as though they were messages from the world of spirits.

Now if we so regard the last words of our earthly friends, how should we reverence the parting speech of CHRIST our Heavenly Brother. His disciples did. The "little while" during which they should see Him, was now all but gone; it was the last of those forty days since His Resurrection. From Easter morning until now He had, at times, appeared to them—comforting their hearts—yet thus preparing them for His departure: to S. Peter at the sepulchre, to the eleven, excepting Thomas, "the same day at evening, when the doors were shut," saying, "Peace be unto you;" giving them His commission, "as My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you;" breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Again, "after eight days," to Thomas and the rest, showing to him, especially, His Hands and His Side, that he might not be "faithless, but believing;"[1] to the Eleven, on the mountain in Galilee;[2] "after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;"[3] to S. Peter, S. Thomas, and others, "at the sea of Tiberias;" giving also to S. Peter His pastoral charge, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep;" "after that He was seen of James" the less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem; "then of all the Apostles" at Jerusalem, bidding them "that they should not depart from [thence], but wait [there] for the promise of the FATHER."

[1] S. John xx. 19—27. [2] S. Matt. xxviii. 16. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7.

And now the day was come when He should return unto the FATHER—it was a memorable day; that "fifth day" of the week when, in the beginning, "the waters" brought "forth abundantly, the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven"[1]—a figure of that abundant spiritual life which the waters of Baptism should in after times bring forth through the power of the HOLY GHOST, Whom He was about to send. It was that same day of the week on which He had given them His Body to be their spiritual food and sustenance in His holy Sacrament. CHRIST had "led them out as far as to Bethany." The hour approached wherein He should depart from His disciples; but they seemed to expect that He would continue with them. He had told them, saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," and they seem to have supposed that He would now put it forth. He had spoken of "twelve thrones" on which they should sit, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel,"[2] and so they appeared to think that He would now proclaim Himself King of Israel. He had been "speaking" to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of GOD," and they referred what He said to the temporal Israel alone. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, LORD, wilt Thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?"[3]

This at once shows upon what their thoughts were bent; they had heard their LORD constantly speak of a kingdom, but they did not as yet fully understand the nature of that kingdom: they had overlooked another saying of His, "The kingdom of GOD is within you;" their minds seemed full of an earthly visible kingdom; the kingdom of Israel had come to an end; Judah could

[1] Gen. i. 20. [2] S. Matt. xix. 28. [3] Acts i. 6.

scarcely be called a kingdom, for the Romans had even then well-nigh "taken away their place and nation;" ancient prophecy spoke of Israel's restoration; they saw in their Divine Master the Person of Israel's greatest King; visions of a throne and dominions and principalities and powers passed before them; all the wonderful events that had happened within those last few weeks, the mysterious words of their LORD, the forebodings of their own minds—all seemed to point out that they were on the very eve of some wonderful manifestation. Impatient, it may be, of delay; eager certainly to know the truth; they could no longer refrain from the pointed question, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

And how did our LORD answer their inquiry? He did not deny the truth of their conjecture that Israel's kingdom should be restored; He did not say that He Himself would not be its restorer (nay, rather He admitted the truth of their belief), but He told them that they must be content to be ignorant of the *time*; "it is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the FATHER hath put in His Own power." It was no new thing for CHRIST to speak thus to them of the present and the future. "Jerusalem," He had said, "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled:"[1] but of that *time*, like the day of His Own coming, none knew, none were to know: "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels of heaven, but My FATHER only."[2] It was enough for them to know that "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."[3] To know more than this would lead them to walk by *sight*, and not by *faith*; but to walk by *faith* was the *better* way,

[1] S. Luke xxi. 24. [2] S. Matt. xxiv. 36. [3] Eccl. iii. 1.

though they might not think it the *surer* one; and because they knew "not when the time is," therefore they were to "take heed, watch and pray."[1] But though they were not to know the *time* of CHRIST's kingdom, yet they had a *work* to do to bring on that time. The *good tidings* of the kingdom was first to be preached "unto all nations," and then should "the end be;"[2] and their commission was, "Go *ye* into all the world, and preach" that "Gospel to every creature."[3] *One* time and *one* season they were to know—the time and the season when they should begin their work—and the sign of that time and season He was pleased to give them: "Ye shall *receive power* after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you." They were CHRIST's last words, and I said that we pondered over last words; let us then dwell on these, and think what they were meant to teach us.

From the day of Adam's fall the world had groaned under three giant evils,—*doubt, despair, death;* these made up man's misery; this was and is the *curse* upon disobedience. Mankind wandered hither and thither in their imaginations, uncertain whither they were going. Like Adam their forefather, they were outcasts from the Paradise and Presence of GOD; like Cain, his offspring, they were vagabonds in the earth, fugitives from the wrath of Him against Whom Adam had rebelled. Doubt and uncertainty overhung their steps, and their minds were more and more darkened as they lost sight of GOD. Ignorance prevailed the more as the old traditions respecting GOD became weakened or obscured: the confusion of tongues, and the scattering of the people over the face of the earth, though it might *preserve* the truth, would neither help men in their search after it, nor lead them to encourage one another in the

[1] S. Mark xiii. 33. [2] S. Matt. xxiv. 14. [3] S. Mark xvi. 15.

pursuit or the profession of it. So, in despair of finding it, they gave themselves up to their own imaginations, and followed their own devices. The fear of death filled them with terror, and added to their misery and perplexity; the more so as they were in doubt or unbelief of eternal life, were ignorant of the way to it, and despaired of finding it.

But knowledge went forth for the nations; a Light sprung up amid the darkness of the earth; a Guide was sent to show mankind the way in which they were to walk: not, indeed, the *fullest* knowledge, or the *brightest* light, or the *most perfect* way; these were reserved until it had been seen how men should endure a previous revelation. In the call of Abraham and the gradual growth of the Jewish Church, Almighty GOD was manifesting Himself to men, and preparing the world for that fuller revelation of Himself and of His will, which should wholly satisfy man's desire of *guidance*, of *knowledge*, and of *life*. It was a city set upon a hill; the dwelling-place of GOD's chosen ones, whom He placed within it; the refuge of the heathen, if only they would flee to it for safety. Therein mankind might be free from doubt; for the glory of GOD betokened His actual Presence; His *immediate* teaching conveyed to His people the certainty of truth; in solemn rites and holy sacrifices they received a pledge of freedom from the curse of sin,—assurance of a future life. All was indeed enwrapt in mysterious types and shadows; but through them they could discern the promises of GOD, even as the morning sun peering through the clouds and darkness.

But as in Eden Satan seduced the *will* of man to an act of disobedience, and thus marred the beauty and the unity of the first creation; so, by again estranging from

GOD the minds of His people, and leading them to mark and admire the practices of the surrounding nations, they fell, too, into acts of disobedience. "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared after them . . . and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise."[1] Such was the *warning* to GOD's ancient people. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."[2] Such was their *law*. But they heeded not the one, nor obeyed the other; so idolatry corrupted the Church of old; divisions crept in; schism rent the kingdom of Israel from Judah; the unity of the Church was broken; the prophets testified against them, but in vain; they summoned to repentance, but their voice was scorned or disregarded. The punishment followed: Israel disappeared, from being a visible kingdom; Judah, by turns corrupted and purified for awhile, at length but feebly manifested the truth of GOD to the Gentile world which was sinking deeper and deeper into heathen practices.

But at that very time came forth another *witness* to the world: GOD came, *visibly*, to declare for Himself His Own will; to reveal *Himself* to men as the Fulfiller of their desires—the long-expected One. The SON of GOD "came forth from the FATHER, and [was] come into the world."[3] What did men behold? One Who *seemed* like themselves, Who *was* like themselves—a true and very Man. What did they hear of Him? One of austere life, in raiment of camel's hair, pointing to Him, said, "Behold the LAMB of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of the world."[4] What did He say of Him-

[1] Deut. xii. 30.
[2] Deut. xii. 32.
[3] S. John xvi. 28.
[4] S. John i. 29.

self? "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." What did He bid men do? He "began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[1] Why did they regard His word? Because He said that He was GOD, and heaven gave testimony to the truth of what He spake. Why did they not in fear flee His Presence? Because He drew them to Him by all the sympathies of His Manhood. The world saw what it had never before witnessed,—a GOD-Man dwelling among them; men felt what they had never before experienced,—that they had no want which He could not supply, no desire which He could not satisfy. In Him many could not fail to see the Prophet's words fulfilled, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."[2]

But the devil, trembling for his own power and kingdom, blinded the eyes of multitudes, that they should not recognise Him; perverted their wills, that they should not abide His counsel. He, too, Who had said, "I am the Way," now said, even to His intimate and chosen ones, "I go My way." The Truth declared, "Henceforth I will not speak much with you." The Life seemed vanquished by Satan, who had the power of death.

Thus man's hopes seemed disappointed, his belief deceived, his love and confidence betrayed. It was indeed but for "a little while:" with Easter morn hope rose again, faith revived, love was afresh enkindled. Yet again it was but for "a little while:" forty days had quickly passed away; the LORD was speaking to His disciples; He was reminding them of a promise of His FATHER, which they had heard of from Him,—was assuring them that

[1] S. Matt. iv. 17. [2] S. Matt. iv. 16.

"not many days hence," and it should be fulfilled to them; their hearts were stirred within them; a great and long-wished-for event, they thought, was on the eve of being consummated—when lo! from the midst of them He rises and soars heavenwards; with uplifted Hands He gives them a parting benediction—a cloud receives Him out of their sight.

And now which was the way?—what the truth?—where the life? The Kingdom of GOD which He had said was among them, who could know it, now that its King had disappeared? Men seemed doomed to disappointment—their hopes raised one day, to be dashed to the ground the next—their faith strengthened one hour, the following to be urged on to unbelief—doubt no sooner solved, than despair of all things seemed likely to succeed—joy hardly realized, than sorrow threatening to disperse it.

"*Let patience have her perfect work.*" Yet ten days,—though they knew not the time,—and there would be comfort, for "*The* Comforter" should come: JESUS had ascended on high to send Him forth from the FATHER. So it was. Whitsun-day came: the Apostles visibly *received* power—the Kingdom of GOD came with power: men saw that it was so, and confessed it; it was set up in their hearts and among men—in the world, though not of the world. Men spake as "the oracles of GOD," they ministered "of the ability which GOD giveth." Apostles and disciples bore witness in words, by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds; they went forth to deliver this their testimony in the order which their LORD had bidden them—first, "in Jerusalem;" then, "in all Judæa;" next, "in Samaria;" then, "into the uttermost parts of the earth." The promise was fulfilled: thus GOD was glorified, through

JESUS CHRIST; for herein He had completely provided for the every need of all men.

Now, among the many tokens of CHRIST's continued Presence with our own Church, is her inheritance, with the rest of the Church Catholic, of those ancient and common pastures of the flock of CHRIST which are contained within the circle of her yearly teaching. The Epistles and Gospels of this Ascension Festival illustrate and confirm the truth of that remark. *They* have suggested the thoughts of alternate doubt and certainty, ignorance and knowledge, faith and fear, hope and despair, joy and sorrow, life and death, which, I said, have from the days of Adam been the misery of man; which the Church of old did not wholly remove—from which GOD manifest in the flesh did not set men free—which even His chosen and beloved disciples perhaps most of all and most keenly felt. In her teaching at this time the Church now, as ever, is telling us the mind of CHRIST her Head, speaking to us with His Voice, and bidding us heed His words and seek in them our instruction and comfort in every perplexity.

And surely, brethren, the words of the text have a very special value at this time. Perhaps what most of all is occupying the minds of earnest and thinking members of the Church of England now, is the desire of *external* unity in Christendom—the restoration of that *visible* fellowship which once knit the whole Church East and West, in the communion of an *evident* brotherhood. A noble object indeed it is, worthy of our deepest thoughts, our most fervent prayers, our truly diligent endeavours in that station where the Providence of GOD has placed us. We lament, as indeed we must, that East and West no longer maintain a visible intercommunion—that the Western Church is

itself divided: as a consequence we see and confess with sorrow that the faith is more or less endangered, discipline relaxed, the powers of the world oppressing the Church of CHRIST, infidelity abounding and increasing, Satan exulting at his triumphs within the kingdom of our LORD. We call to mind that prayer of JESUS, "that they all may be one;" and perplex ourselves with the question, "Did our LORD mean nothing by it?"—we remember His words, "the HOLY GHOST shall guide you into all truth," and we distress ourselves with the inquiry, "*What* am I, *Whom* am I to believe?" *Visible* unity, we persuade ourselves, is absolutely needful for ascertaining and maintaining truth; then only we say will the world bow before the Majesty of CHRIST'S Church; then only will heathenism and infidelity be effectually shaken, and "the kingdoms of this world . . . become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST." The disciples' question is the inquiry of heart or mouth now, "LORD, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

And surely, brethren, the reply of JESUS to them may well content us now—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the FATHER hath put in His own power." They thought the restoration of Israel at that time—the re-union of the ten tribes to the two which continued joined in Judah—essential to the fulfilment of GOD'S promises—we perhaps think the restoration of our long-lost unity even more needful. What is the Voice of GOD? "It is not for you to *know*." The Apostles knew that a long line of prophets had foretold this ultimate restoration of Israel: they believed the time for it had come. What said the LORD? "The times and the seasons" are in the FATHER'S "Own power." As reasonably might we doubt the Word of

GOD, that He "hath not cast away His [ancient] people which He foreknew,"[1] because the Jews are strangers and wanderers on the face of the earth—as reasonably deny that Israel, now cut off, shall one day "be graffed in again,"[2] because the ten tribes seem lost, or because the remnant of Judah's kingdom has for 1800 years been separate from CHRIST—as reasonably, I say, might we disbelieve these things as doubt whether we or others are a part of the Visible Church BECAUSE we are not *visibly united*, whereas our LORD promised "there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."[3]

Our danger is as great as was that of the first disciples, lest we limit GOD's promises by our own notions of time and place and opportunity. He has indeed distinctly promised the Visible Unity of CHRIST's spiritual kingdom, but nowhere are we told the time or the season of it. What if, as Holy Scripture seems distinctly to teach, that Visible Unity is not to be manifested until JESUS the King shall *visibly* return to take unto Himself the Kingdom! What if that visible union shall not be consummated until that day when "Israel according to the flesh" shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD!"[4] What if divisions multiply, the faith be all but hidden, charity grown cold, as this generation of men passes away, and The Day of the LORD draws on! Are we, then, to oppose our finite views of what *ought* to be, to these plain intimations of GOD's Word, to the history of His ancient people, to the experience of all past events since JESUS visibly departed from His disciples? May we permit our faith to waver, or suffer our duties to relax, because our only answer when we inquire after the reunion of divided Christen-

[1] Rom. xi. 1.
[2] Rom. xi. 23.
[3] S. John x. 16.
[4] S. Matt. xxiii. 39.

dom, is, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the FATHER hath put in His Own power?"

No indeed, brethren, we *may* not, we *must* not. He Whose words at Bethany, on the day of His Ascension, forbad the assembled disciples so to act, no less forbids us now who are also His disciples. But then what is to stay a failing faith—what to stimulate a flagging duty—when the promises of CHRIST seem to any to fail of their fulfilment? What strengthened the *faith* of the disciples? What aroused them to *duty* when the kingdom was not, as they expected, visibly restored to Israel? What but those parting words of CHRIST their LORD and Israel's King—"Ye shall receive power"—"ye shall be witnesses."—Power for what? to maintain in visible unity the kingdom which they were beginning to found in His Name? No; such He knew would be beyond their power, who had been—would be "scattered every one to his own." Witnesses of what? that that whole kingdom should be free from the invasion of Satan, the prince of this world; or escape unharmed from the assaults of him and of his evil ones? No, again, for the contrary was to be a part of their very testimony, who in the world were promised tribulation.

Power they were to receive, and did receive: but it was the power of the HOLY GHOST to raise men from death to life—power to heal or to alleviate the manifold diseases of soul and body which the first Adam's sin had entailed upon his posterity—power to cleanse from the leprosy of sin—power to feed with the Bread of Life the famishing multitudes in the wilderness of this world.

Witnesses they were to be, and were—witnesses to the ineffable mystery that GOD had become incarnate in order to draw all men unto Him—witnesses that they had received from Him a commission to proclaim Him

—witnesses that He had appointed channels of His grace whereby it should flow to men, a way through which all might approach Him Who is *the way* unto that FATHER from Whom every man had become an outcast.

Is then this power among us now? have we received, and do we bear this witness? If so, then, brethren, we have one sufficient answer to all our questionings—a reason fully equal to sustain our faith—a motive adequate enough to labour diligently for GOD in that portion of His spiritual kingdom where He hath cast our lot.

Again I ask, *Is this power among us or not? is this witness borne or not?* Who will be bold enough to deny it? Who will venture to assert that the Church of England, crippled as are her energies, does not manifest this power,—miserably as she is divided, does not in fact bear witness to JESUS? Does she or does she not through the power of the HOLY GHOST work such spiritual miracles as Apostles did? Are no dead souls raised to life, no hungry souls fed and nourished, no sick souls healed, no feeble souls strengthened, no stronger souls confirmed and built up in the faith of CHRIST?

Does she or does she not bear a faithful witness to the mystery of the Incarnation and all its consequences, in the very Creeds and Sacraments which the Catholic Church has from the first used? nay, even, if so it indeed be, with what have been called, "the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies." Well, so it be a true witness, we must bear it patiently, thankful to Him Whose loving merey hath preserved to us such a witness of Himself.

T. W. P.

SERMON XV.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

S. MATT. XXV. 1.

"THEN SHALL THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BE LIKENED UNTO TEN VIRGINS, WHICH TOOK THEIR LAMPS, AND WENT FORTH TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM."

THEN, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER, and the wicked shall be overwhelmed with confusion; when the lowly cottage shall be more esteemed than the gilded palace, when the humble attire shall be more precious than purple robes; when to have lived a humble and lowly life will be more than to have talked well and religiously;—"then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom." What a world of meaning is wrapped up in that little word "then!" It is as if S. Matthew had said, Now men rise up early and late and eat the bread of carefulness; now riches, and honour, and pleasure have their myriads of worshippers. From the multitudes that crowd the land, one cry goes up unceasingly "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The lust

of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life! how do they sweep away whole armies of the living GOD, till but a very small remnant remains to enter into the glory of GOD! But soon the worshippers of the Dianas of this world shall change their cry of homage for the cry for mercy, when the door of mercy is shut. The righteous shall greet their LORD with glad Alleluias, "LO, this is our GOD; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Then too shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "They shall look on Him Whom they have pierced!" they shall gaze upon those five Blessed Wounds, and be amazed and confounded at the sight. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom" as He returned at eventide from the marriage. All the virgins took their lamps alike; but five were wise, and five were foolish.

Christian brethren, we are like these virgins waiting for our LORD, when He shall return from the wedding, when the tares having been bound and the dead branches cut away, the Church shall "be a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," meet Bride for the heavenly Bridegroom, Who was pure and undefiled, Who passed through this sin-stained world as a sunbeam passes over a dunghill, lighting it, and not defiled thereby. All had their lamps; so have we. We all profess and call ourselves Christians; we have all had CHRIST'S sign stamped on our foreheads; we all come to worship Him in His sanctuary. The openly profane, who Sunday after Sunday hear the church bell summon them to worship, and

never heed its warning voice; they have no lamps to show, they have not even the form of godliness; but our business is not with them. The parable of the virgins is no warning to such; but it *is* a warning, and a terrible warning to *us*: it tells us that outward profession without personal holiness is but as the lamp without the oil: nay, the warning comes home to us more strongly still; it does not apply to those who come here to GOD'S house, as hypocrites, knowing that they are acting the hypocrite's part, honouring GOD with their lips while their heart is far from Him. The foolishness of the five virgins was seen, not in their taking no oil at all, but in not providing for their future need. They were not hypocrites, as Judas, when he betrayed his Master with a kiss; rather they were as those who heard the word with gladness, but had no depth of earth. Such are they who embrace the glorious truths of the Gospel while their feelings are roused, and fancy that they could even die for CHRIST'S sake; the devil hides himself for a season: hope burns brightly within them; GOD'S Presence is visibly upon them; they catch faint glimpses of the glories of the far-off Eden, and they long to be there, where sorrow entereth not: but by-and-by their feelings die out, the lamp of hope flickers, GOD seems to have deserted them; they call, but He hears them not; He hides away His Face to try them, and then because they have no root in themselves, because their houses are built upon the shifting sands of feeling, and not upon the firm Rock of CHRIST, they are offended. They fall away, and the last state of such is worse than the first.

Surely, brethren, I must be speaking to some who

have felt this temptation, who have found how ever, after some more especial season of grace, when GOD has vouchsafed His Presence in fuller, more abundant measure, till ye have been ready to cry with S. Peter, "It is good for us to be here;" your vision of peace has been broken in upon, and succeeded by dryness of spirit or a sharper temptation than usual, and ye have been tempted to think that GOD had forgotten you. Yet why should we be fearful, faithless as we are? If we have waited, we have seen how within a while, He gives us again to feel the sweetness of His Presence, to teach us to make Him our only hope, not to rest in any of His creatures, not even in His spiritual gifts, but to learn in all things to be full and to be empty, to be filled with His sweetness and to mourn in His absence, in all things to seek Him and to labour for Him, knowing that hereafter He will be our exceeding great reward. O that we could be content to give up everything, even our own wills, to His Will, then in the great day, when GOD maketh up His jewels, He would place us at His Right Hand, with those who have served Him faithfully here.

When that great day of the LORD cometh is hidden from us: it has been concealed from every age that each generation in its turn should be upon the watch for it. And indeed, it would seem as if our LORD's coming depended upon us, else why does S. Peter speak of hastening the coming of the LORD? why do the souls under the altar cry, "How long, how long?" why does our Church bid us pray over the body of a departed brother or sister, that it would please GOD of His gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom? And what a

picture does this give us of the mercy of GOD that He should be content to wait, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance! Beloved in CHRIST, shall such wondrous love be lost upon us? If GOD is waiting to save us, why are we not anxious to be saved? GOD is waiting now: as yet the day of the LORD tarrieth, that out of this miserable and naughty world CHRIST may gather in the few that are to be saved, one here and there, gleaning grapes when the vintage is done; but CHRIST standeth at the door. Repent, and bring forth the fruits meet for repentance. Let the drunkard give up his drunkenness; let the profane swearer hereafter let no corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth; let him that stole steal no more; let the worldly-minded learn to trust not in his riches, but in GOD Who gave them; let the envious learn to be loving; let the proud be clothed with humility; let the angry learn to be patient; let the glutton and the self-indulgent do violence to himself and fast; let the covetous learn to be content; let the wanton learn to be chaste and pure in heart; let the slothful learn to be diligent.

Sayest thou, "It is no easy matter thou art setting before us, O preacher?" Nay, verily, it is no child's play; not the work of a day or a week, but a work which will demand time and diligence. The fetters of habit are strong, Satan's chains are mighty; but there is One Who can unloose those fetters and knock away those chains, Who shall soon come again to search Jerusalem with candles. Would to GOD that we might all bring forth such fruits of repentance; then would our repentance be accepted, and the stains of our sins washed away. But alas! how true is it still what a

holy Bishop of old said,—"More easily have I found those who have preserved their innocency, than those who have repented of their sins."[1] And the terrible saying of another holy man of old might well make us all tremble, if our hearts were not as hard as the nether millstone,—"Scarce one of ten thousand who have continued in any sinful course of life, without the conscientious practice of a true and timely repentance, do ever so perfectly repent as to obtain the remission of their sins in the hour of death."[2]

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." What! not one found faithful? True that our LORD said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" but here it cannot mean that all were faithless. We are told that five of the virgins were wise; and surely it were no proof of wisdom to slumber and sleep while their LORD tarried. This were only one degree better than the conduct of the foolish servant, "who said in his heart, My LORD delayeth His coming, and should begin to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink and to be drunken." No! our LORD could not have intended us in this parable, which sets forth so strongly the duty of watchfulness, to think that unwatchfulness was a trifling sin. Rather are we to understand this sleeping of the sleep of death. They were all gathered to their fathers, wise and foolish alike, and still CHRIST came not. One by one they were taken away; they were judged and went away, the wise to the abodes of bliss, and the foolish to the kingdom of woe.

Or it may mean only that, having taken measures to prepare to meet their LORD, having done all that

[1] S. Ambrose. [2] S. Jerome.

human hands could do, they laid them down to sleep,—like S. Peter in the prison the night before he expected to be killed, commending their souls into GOD's hands, resting with full confidence on His gracious and watchful protection, "Who keepeth Israel, and neither slumbereth nor sleepeth."

At last He came—at midnight there was a cry, "The Bridegroom cometh." Up to this time, wise and foolish had seemed alike. As the cry of the attendants rang out through the stillness of the midnight hour, the wise arose and trimmed their lamps, pouring in a fresh supply of oil, and were ready to set out. The foolish prepared to follow their example, when lo! they found that they had no fresh supply to pour in; and what they had was well nigh gone. What were they to do? They dare not join the bridal procession, only to have their lamps go out by the way. In their perplexity, they ask the wise to give them of their oil. "Not so," is the answer, "lest there be not enough for us and you." Mark *that*, dearly beloved. The wise man is always a humble man. "Lest there be not enough." How does this recal the saying of S. Paul, "Lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "Lest there be not enough for us and you." Alone we must pass the dark valley; no human arm can aid us *then*. Alone we must stand before GOD's tribunal; alone, though all the world of men and angels are around us; alone, because "no man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto GOD for him." The LORD JESUS cometh quickly, and His reward is with Him, to give every man according as his work shall be: therefore our LORD said not to S. Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, *save* My sheep," but

"*Feed* My sheep;" feed them with the bread of GOD's Word; feed them with "the Living Bread which came down from heaven."

To each and all of you, then, I say,—yet not I, but GOD,—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Moses would have saved his people by the forfeit of his own salvation; yet a very small remnant was saved. S. Paul prayed that he might be accursed for his brethren, yet his prayer was not granted, and CHRIST'S Blood is still upon them to destroy them. "Go ye to them that sell." The hope of the foolish virgins was a false, deceitful hope; it failed them when they were in their greatest need: so the wise, in no tone of scorn or jesting, but in the love which "hopeth all things, believeth all things," bid them go seek for grace where alone they could find it. But while they went, the bridal procession had passed in. "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." The foolish, in despair of finding any oil, come to the door with their lamps gone out, and cry in eager tones, with a half fear stealing over them that it was too late, "LORD, LORD, open to us." And so indeed they found it; it *was* too late. The voice from within answered, "I know you *not*. Ye have not taken up your cross; ye have not sought Me as men in earnest seek; therefore, now *I* know *you* not."

Dearly beloved, that shutting of the door was final. It can never more be opened. Those foolish virgins shall never enter there,—shall never drink of the River of Life, which proceedeth from the throne of GOD. So, when you die, the door is shut, if you die in your sins. GOD grant that the fate of these foolish virgins may sink deep into all our hearts! Imagine yourselves

standing without in despair, knocking at the door which was for ever shut to you. What would you not give then for a few years of the life you have wasted, to atone for the past; but then it will be in vain.

But as yet there is hope; as yet "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come;" as yet the door is open, and you may enter thereat and see the King in His beauty. The door is open; heaven is wide; there is room enough for all,—for all who will cast away their sins. To every one that cometh in penitence that door will open of its own accord. Murderers have come in at that door; publicans and harlots have come in at that door. Truly, a wondrous door is it; for that door is CHRIST. But soon it may be for us that door shall be shut; seek we to enter now, while it is called to-day. Say not, "I will think over it to-morrow;" but say rather, with S. Augustine, "Why not to-day, why not this very hour?"[1] "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." Day is declining; shadows are lengthening across our path; the night will soon be here when no man can work, and then it will be too late.

> "No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
> Oh let us in, that we may find the light!
> Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now."

Oh, it were sad beyond what the heart of man could conceive, or tongue of man could utter, to have one glimpse of the golden streets, to catch one burst of the song of the redeemed; and then, to see the gates of

[1] Cf. S. Aug. Conf. lib. viii. c. xii.

pearl swing to, and with the angelic song ringing in our ears, to be cast into outer darkness, to hear nought but the wailings of the lost, to see nought but the blackness of darkness for ever and ever. From which GOD, of His great mercy preserve us, for the sake of His SON JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

W. B.

SERMON XVI.

THE ETERNITY OF PUNISHMENT.

S. MATTHEW X. 28.

"AND FEAR NOT THEM WHICH KILL THE BODY, BUT ARE NOT ABLE TO KILL THE SOUL; BUT RATHER FEAR HIM WHICH IS ABLE TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL."

THE distinct nature of the soul, its independency upon the body, and its immortality, are with sufficient evidence implied in these words. And therefore I shall make it the business of this discourse to inquire into one condition of it in its separate state; viz., into the nature of those punishments which our holy religion assures us shall be the portion of the wicked in another world. "Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Forasmuch then as it is manifest that the destruction here mentioned signifies calamity and torment, I shall first inquire into the nature of that torment: secondly, show the possibility of it; and, thirdly, the justice.

First, then, as to the nature of that torment which awaits the wicked in another life: it is expressed in Scripture by a worm, and a fire; "a worm that never

dieth, and a fire that is never quenched." By the worm is meant that sting of conscience, that remorse and anguish of soul, which wicked men shall feel in another world for all the evils which they committed in this; and which GOD, by an unalterable decree, hath made the inseparable companions of guilt. By the fire we can understand nothing but that material elemental fire, which we know to be the instrument of the most quick and exquisite torment, that we can possibly conceive in this world. And as to the duration of both these, the Scriptures everywhere assure us that it shall be eternal. To this purpose are those expressions, "The wicked shall go into everlasting fire." And in the Epistle of S. Jude, "they shall suffer the vengeance of everlasting fire." But it is objected by some that frequently throughout the Scriptures eternal and everlasting are used to signify only a limited duration: as when GOD saith, He will make "Jerusalem an eternal excellency:" and that He will give the land of Canaan to the children of "Israel for an everlasting inheritance." I answer, these promises are all conditional, and proposed as rewards of obedience; and therefore, although they should be granted not figurative, but intended in the literal extent and import of the words, yet since the conditions of those promises were not performed, there can be no imputation upon the justice and veracity of GOD for not fulfilling them. Forasmuch, then, as this is exactly the case with regard to eternal rewards and punishments, our Blessed SAVIOUR hath expressly declared that "they that have done evil shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life." This is a conditional declaration, and if the conditions be fulfilled, the declaration must of necessity

take effect, otherwise it is impossible to vindicate the veracity and the justice of GOD. And therefore it is that our Blessed SAVIOUR, to obviate all possibility of doubt or evasion upon this head, repeats and inculcates the eternity of hell torments, no less than three times in the ninth chapter of S. Mark's gospel at the forty-third and following verses, where, speaking of those corruptions that must be mortified, and those darling desires that must be parted with, must be torn away from the heart, rather than indulged in sin, He tells us, "If thy hand offend, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of GOD with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." By this means, industriously cutting off all hope and prospect of this punishment being only appointed for a limited duration. More than this, in the twenty-fifth chapter of S. Matthew, at the forty-sixth verse, after our Blessed SAVIOUR had denounced the sentence that should be passed upon the wicked at the last day in the forty-first verse, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" and added the reasons of that sentence; He concludes in this manner: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Now forasmuch as the happiness here promised to the righ-

teous is by *all* agreed to be truly and strictly eternal, the punishment which is opposed to it must of necessity be so too. The plain design of our LORD's appointing that great and terrible day—the day of judgment—is to reward and punish His creation, according to their observance or transgression of those laws which He hath given. And that, too, in such a manner as that the sentence then denounced will probably remain a monument of the terror and certainty of Divine justice to succeeding creations—to all eternity!

It is further urged, that there are many Divine threats mentioned in the Scriptures, which were never fulfilled; as in the case of Nineveh, and many others; and consequently that GOD is not obliged to execute His threats. To this I answer that all those threats are plainly conditional: and when the condition was fulfilled they ceased of course. And this appears from GOD's Own declaration: "For at what instant shall I speak (saith GOD) concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil which I thought to do unto them." It is evident from hence, that these threats are conditional; and so likewise the denunciations of eternal vengeance are conditional; and therefore, if we repent and forsake our sins, will also become void and of no effect. If we forsake our sins, as the Ninevites did, we shall without question escape eternal damnation, as they did temporal punishment: otherwise, our destruction will be as inevitable, as, without repentance, theirs certainly had been. And to convince you that GOD will not be remiss in the execution of His threats, let us remember, that when Samuel

denounced GOD's wrath against Saul, and that the kingdom was rent from him for his disobedience in relation to Amalek; he adds, "The Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent;" clearly implying, that the justice and veracity of GOD were concerned in inflicting a punishment which He had absolutely denounced, and the event declared it to be so. Again, when GOD declared that none of those which had murmured against Him in the wilderness should enter into the land of Canaan, He subjoins, "I the LORD have said it, I will surely do it;"—plainly implying that His decrees are immortal, and will most certainly have their effect.

Having thus shown you the nature and duration of those torments which shall be the portion of wicked men in another world, I proceed in the next place to show the possibility of them. In opposition to that objection with which some pretenders to wisdom are so apt to insult believers, viz., that it is impossible for these bodies of ours to subsist in flames; and, therefore, much less can they be conceived capable of eternal duration in that destructive element; to this I shall beg leave to answer, by asking these men whether they can demonstrate that the same laws must, and will certainly and continually obtain in another world in relation to the solidity and continuity of our bodies, that obtain at present in this. If they cannot demonstrate this, their objection is of no force; besides we should remember that at the Resurrection our bodies are to be "changed," and "raised in incorruption." They shall then cease to be perishable as they now are; and shall become permanent and of perpetual duration in order to be accommodated to the nature of that immortal

soul from which they are never more to be parted. And therefore to object to their eternal duration in fire in another world from their condition in this, is altogether irrational.

I shall now proceed finally to inquire into the justice of them.

In the first place, then, I apprehend that such conduct as would be accounted wise and just in a wise and righteous ruler in this world, ought not to be deemed unwise or unjust in the Great Governor of the universe. Now I appeal to common sense, whether the condemning a wicked villain to close confinement and hard labour during the whole course of his life, might not, in many cases, well become the best, the wisest and the justest governor upon earth? And shall we deem it unjust in GOD to punish for life in another world, for the prevention of eternal evil, and the terror of beings that are to live for ever?

But, secondly, justice requires that the penalty assigned to the transgressing or disobeying of all laws should be proportionable to the good that is to be obtained by the observance of them. For the nature and end of government clearly require that as reward and advantage should attend duty and obedience; so, likewise, that evil and inconvenience should await transgression and disobedience in the same proportion. Consequently that the penalties of laws that are calculated for infinite advantage, should be such as might be sufficient to hinder the violation of those laws. And that nothing less than eternal vengeance could be a sufficient sanction against the violation of the Divine laws is evident; because even that is too often ineffectual. If, then, everlasting happiness be the reward of obe-

dience to the laws of God, then everlasting misery ought in justice to be the punishment of disobedience to them. And this argument at once cuts off all those cavils about the proportion between temporal crimes and eternal punishments. For let these punishments but be considered as the penalties of laws, calculated for infinite and eternal good; and reason will immediately infer that the penalties of all laws should be such as might best prevent the transgression and violation of them, and enforce and secure to them a serious and awful observance; and therefore, that nothing less than eternal and infinite evil could be a wise, a proper, or in any sense an adequate penalty in the case before us.

I shall mention one thing more, which if it doth not carry with it the strength and force of full demonstration, yet at least appears highly reasonable and just: the argument is this :—If habitual and hardened sinners, that have died in their guilt, are doing evil to all eternity, then is it but just that they should suffer evil to all eternity. Now that they are doing evil to all eternity seems reasonable to believe from the nature of habitual sin; which gives the mind such a corrupt and perverse disposition, and such an aversion from God and goodness, as must continue with it to all eternity. If the wicked man hated God in this world when he received so many blessings and benefits from Him, will he love Him in the next, when He hath renounced him and shut him out of His Presence for ever? If he hated virtue in this world, when it might have been of advantage to him, will he love it in the next, when it can no more be of use to him? Is it not more reasonable to believe that he will fall into the same desperate condition with those accursed spirits to whose society he is

condemned,—that he will become like them, a monster of evil, and will place his only remain of happiness in rebellion and revenge, and in doing despite to GOD and goodness, as far as he is able, to all eternity? If an expulsion from the Presence and favour of GOD here be an insupportable calamity to a thinking being, how dreadful will that sentence be at the last day, "Depart from Me, ye cursed!"

The pangs of a guilty conscience are often piercing and inconsolable, even in this life, amidst all the false diversions that endeavour to alleviate and amuse them. Good GOD, how dreadful must all these be when they are awakened into all their terror, and the soul hath nothing to divert it from reflecting upon horror and guilt and everlasting perdition! It cannot be denied that an exemption from the miseries of the other world would be a prospect of great consolation to wicked men at the hour of death; and yet upon supposition that this could be obtained, it is evident to a demonstration that they would be eternally and insupportably miserable even after this. For if the escape from eternal evil be an infinite good, then, by the same parity of reason, the deprivation of eternal good will be an infinite evil. So that although an exemption from infinite evil might, at first, be matter of great consolation to a sinner; yet the sense of being bereft of infinite good, of losing not only the prospect of his wonted happiness, but even of the highest and most consummate felicity, would even after that be an eternal and intolerable affliction to his soul. This will be clear from a very familiar instance. Suppose the rich man, in the Gospel, upon being taken out of this world to be carried, not into hell, but into some other region from whence he had all the joys and

glories of heaven in full prospect—but with a great gulf fixed between which could not be passed over from either side:—suppose him in this situation to see Lazarus, (whom he would not have set to eat with his dogs,) in full enjoyment of all the heavenly beatitudes, and himself eternally excluded. Supposing in this situation he neither needed dogs to lick his sores, nor water to cool his tongue in torment, would he be happy for all that? Far from it! For if the evil habits of the mind, contracted in this world, continue with it for ever,—as undoubtedly they must,—it is evident that remorse, rancour, and envy would still raise worse sores and ulcers in his soul, and kindle a fire that could never be quenched. Take away, then, the torments of another world from a sinner, and still he will, he must be miserable as long as he leaves the beatitudes of heaven behind him! How wretched—how unspeakably deplorable is the condition of that man whom a riddance from eternal torments can never make happy, and whom even the blessedness of heaven must make eternally miserable! And is not every impenitent sinner this man? Yes! This is the very best that a hardened sinner can hope; but, alas! it is the least that he must endure; he must not only lose eternal good, but he must feel eternal evil. He must not only be deprived of the joys of heaven, but he must be immersed in the miseries of hell; "into that fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." From which dismal and intolerable doom, God of His infinite mercy deliver us all through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. Amen.

T. T. L.

SERMON XVII.

PRAYING AND WATCHING.

EPHES. VI. 18—20.

"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, AND WATCHING THEREUNTO WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL SAINTS; AND FOR ME, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. FOR WHICH I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS: THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK."

LENT, my brethren, is the Church's special opportunity for prayer and supplication; for that Ear of Mercy, which is always more ready to hear than we to pray, is then widest open to the sinner's *penitential* cries. And the promise of Easter blessings allures many a loving soul into the wilderness, to be alone with JESUS, that He may speak comfortably unto her, and she may wait upon the LORD without distraction; and the "SPIRIT of grace and of supplications" is already being poured out, that we may come *boldly* to the Throne of Grace,—that we may pray in the SPIRIT and with the SPIRIT, fervently, untiringly, and effectually.

At this season of self-denial and self-discipline, Christian faith and love, lifting up holy hands without doubt-

ing, surpass the endurance of saints of old, and achieve greater victories. Now does some son of faithful Abraham intercede for the guilty city—even our own; now does a Christian Jacob wrestle all night against approaching danger; now does patient Job pray for his friends, and is himself accepted. Moses stretches out his arms crosswise on the mount, while the battle is raging below, and wins the victory. Gideon, with his three hundred, puts to flight all the Midianites. Elias opens heaven, and there is a great rain. Daniel takes no pleasant food for many weeks, mourns his own and his people's iniquities, and understands the Vision of the End, and is assured of his own eternal rest. Ezra is ashamed, and blushes for the strange marriages and other abominations among us, and works a reformation. David confesses his deadly sin, and is pardoned. Hezekiah weeps sore for fear of death, and has his days prolonged. Manasseh humbles himself in captivity, and is restored. Now the poor publican smites his breast in the Temple, and is justified. The man of importunity rises at midnight, and intreats for his friend the three graces of repentance, faith, and love, and is not sent empty away. Cornelius fasts, and an angel assures him that his alms and prayers are gone up for a memorial before GOD.

Now, too, does some Christian Rebekah, in conflict and travail of soul, inquire of the LORD. Rachel wrestles greatly for some of her sister's blessings. Hannah, the woman of a sorrowful spirit, goes to some Eli, and pours her trouble into his ear, and receives his blessing, which is the LORD's. The Shunammite asks Elisha to raise her son from the death of sin. Some noble Esther fasts with her maidens, and averts her nation's danger, and

is accepted of the Great King. The woman of Canaan cries to JESUS for her daughter, and *wills* that she should be healed. The woman that is a sinner washes JESUS' feet, and has all forgiven. The aged Anna serves GOD in His Temple with fastings and prayers night and day, and sees the LORD'S CHRIST. She that is a widow indeed, and really solitary, continues in prayer night and day. Peter is in prison—some foremost, much-loved champion of the Church has fallen into the enemy's hands—but prayer is made without ceasing of the Church unto GOD for him, and the LORD, by a special miracle, delivers him from the evil expectation of all who seek his life.

These and other instances of effectual, fervent prayer are recorded in the Word of Truth for our encouragement and imitation at this season,—nay, we are even to surpass them. For is not this the dispensation of the SPIRIT? Have not we, brethren, received Elisha's double portion? grace upon grace? the grace of Confirmation upon the grace of Baptism; and the grace of many Eucharists upon them both? Has not the SPIRIT of adoption been granted to us, "in Whom we cry, Abba, FATHER?" Is it not because by nature we are weak, that the SPIRIT *helpeth* our infirmities? because we know not what to pray for as we ought, the SPIRIT Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings unutterable, according to the will of GOD?

Hence it is that our LORD tells us, we Christians "ought always to pray, and not to faint." And S. Paul exhorts to "pray without ceasing," "continue instant in prayer,"—that is, hold on tight to prayer; just as a man in jeopardy holds on, mightily putting forth all his strength, to what alone is his hope of life, to let go

which is certain destruction. And the Apostle further adds, "Be watchful," or wakeful, "therein with thanksgiving:" using the same word as our LORD, when He speaks of His sudden coming,—"Be watchful," i. e. sleepless, "and pray; for ye know not when the time is." And in the text he exhorts, in words of wonderful fulness, "Pray in the SPIRIT, with *all* prayer and supplication, at *all* seasons; *watching* thereunto with *all* perseverance," or fast holding on, "and with supplication for all saints."

See, brethren, what a rule of prayer is here set before us! what a standard of devotion! "Pray with *all* prayer, at *all* seasons, for *all* saints, with *all* perseverance, with watchfulness, sleeplessness, thanksgiving." "How is the word 'all' repeated, lest we should think that anything short of all of which we are really capable might content us."[1] And the Apostle evidently deems this rule of prayer *absolutely necessary* for a Christian,—this standard of devotion *quite attainable* by him: *necessary*, because, as he warns us in the foregoing verses, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spirits of wickedness in heavenly places; we have to stand against the wiles of the devil: *attainable*, because we have the SPIRIT, and may pray in the SPIRIT, and with the SPIRIT, being "strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might."

Alas! what a contrast is there between this ancient habit of devotion, this persevering endurance, fast holding on to prayer, *with watching*, and that cold, listless, sleepy, irksome, faithless, loveless, quickly-got-over, perfunctory form, which goes by the name of morning and evening prayer, with many amongst ourselves!

[1] Plain Sermons, Vol. iii., Serm. "Pray without ceasing."

Take the majority of those who are communicants even, and profess to be aiming at a religious life: what is the quantum of daily prayer with which they rest satisfied, believing it will protect them from the crafts and assaults of the devil,—enable them to escape the evils that *are* coming, and to stand before the Son of Man? Does it not fall far below the Gospel standard? Is it as much as three times a day—the morning, evening, and noonday of David, but without his instance or fast holding on? Is there any "watching thereunto,"—any abridgment of sleep, (which our LORD and His Apostles so plainly command,) that there may be more time to pray? And even in our own case, do we, my brethren, who come regularly to the morning and evening service, to the Litany as well, to the celebration of the Holy Communion as well,—I ask, do we, who enjoy so many Church blessings, devote as much time to private prayer, with watching and thanksgiving, as S. Paul would consider absolutely necessary for persons *in our position of life*, with so much leisure on our hands,—with so many ways of making time, as the saying is,—with such abundant gifts of grace,—so great temptations in society,—such wearing trials, it may be, in our own homes,—so much spiritual imperfection in ourselves,—such awful responsibilities,—such a tremendous account at the Bar of Judgment,—so searching a scrutiny into all our motives in the light of CHRIST'S Coming?

Now suffer me to bring this matter home to the conscience by one or two very plain questions. Would some of you, brethren, who are living in the world, perhaps even indulging freely in its gaieties and excitement, like to go to S. Paul, were he alive, as a guide of souls, and take his advice this Lent how you might best

give your time and thoughts to prayer for the saving of your souls? Could any of you tell the Apostle, without reserve or shrinking, that out of the whole twenty-four hours you usually devoted so many to sleep; so many to meals, so many to dress, to looking in the glass even; so many to business, recreation, the demands of society; and the pitiful remainder, the remnant after all that is worth anything is gone, to your prayers? Could you tell him that of time for prayer you had very little, and that little seemed a weariness; but that the whole evening passed too soon,—part of the night even was spent in frivolous, perhaps not altogether innocent, amusement? Could you readily allow that you could abridge sleep under the pressure of business, or the excitement of pleasure, or for a journey, or for nursing the sick, and yet had no will or thought to watch with your LORD one hour, or to rise from sleep *when He awakes you*, and pray lest you should enter into temptation?

Oh, I do believe there is utterly a fault in the religious life of many of us; and for this reason,—because we are so cold and formal in our prayers; because we pray so seldom and so little; because we never "watch thereunto with thanksgiving;" because we have no *will* to pray. And yet (which makes our case so much worse—in fact, without excuse) we have received, every one of us, the SPIRIT of adoption to teach us to pray, to help us to pray, to comfort us in prayer, to answer our prayers; and still we do not rouse ourselves to a consciousness of the Divine Presence within, of an Almighty Being ever ready to aid our very first and feeblest efforts,—a hidden Fire smouldering in our souls, which the breath of prayer would fan into a burning flame. We do not stir up the Gift that is in us; we neglect the

Gift, we reject the Gift, we quench—O foolish, O most unwise, O most ungrateful, we do despite to—the SPIRIT of Grace.

And what then? Why most surely that gracious, loving, tender Guide and Comforter departs grieved from our hearts; and in His stead steals in another spirit, the spirit of sloth and of a rationalising unbelief, which delays, grows weary, argues, makes excuses, tampers with GOD's Word, and explains its literal meaning all away; dares to call that figurative and impossible which apostles and saints in all ages have found to be possible and most real. But how, my brethren, can we venture to say that our LORD, when He bids us 'pray at all times,' means *some times*; that when the HOLY GHOST, by S. Paul, says, 'Pray without ceasing,' He means, pray *now and then*, and then for the most part cease; that when He bids us 'hold on fast to prayer,' He means we should let it go; that by 'night and day' means a few thoughts of GOD morning and evening; that 'watchfulness' and 'sleeplessness' means slumber and sleep; that 'watch and pray' means 'sleep on now, and take your rest;' that to pray at all seasons means (and this is the very best of these miserable explanations) to be at all times in a state *fit* for prayer, if we are called upon; but not thinking ourselves called upon, it means *not* to pray, except at two seasons, perhaps, morning and evening?

But, my beloved brethren, what is all this (to speak plainly) but to mock Almighty GOD? to trifle with His Eternal Word, and ruin our souls? Or, if we are not profane enough to say all this in so many words, but only *act* daily as if we meant it, what do we then but add insincerity, hypocrisy to the catalogue of sins;

incur the condemnation of those who say, and do not; prepare for the stripes of him who knew his LORD'S will, and would not do it? Are we not building our house upon the sand, which in the time of the great water-flood will be swept away, and the place thereof shall nowhere be found?

What, then, is the practical conclusion we should now determine on? In the first place, let no one be discouraged by having so high a standard, so strict a rule placed before him. We profess to be "high" in everything else connected with religion; we must not be "low" in our prayers. The world sneers at us as high, and the poor world for once speaks truth. We have high views of sacramental grace, high views of sanctification, high views of self-denial, self-sacrifice; high views of union with GOD by the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST; high views of future reward; but is it not to be feared they are often only *views?* Men look at these great realities with a passing glance; gaze at them occasionally as a Vision of Beauty; but they draw not near to embrace it, to be absorbed in it, possessed by it. They are content it should be to them in a "land very far off." Oh, how will our very Creed condemn us! We profess "Thy righteousness, O GOD, is very high." How can we attain that righteousness, unless we stretch ourselves, and aim high? We pray, "O set me up upon the Rock that is higher than I." How can we be set upon that Rock, unless we climb its sides, though they be steep and craggy? How can we even hope to escape the surging waves of evil, which *are* advancing with a rising tide upon us, unless we hasten to catch at the rope that is let down from above for our rescue, and begin boldly to ascend, holding on tight,

while the strong Man guides and draws us upward to Himself, into some cleft of the Rock, where for a while we may be secure from fear of evil? And what is that rope, strong and saving, which draws the imperilled soul up to JESUS, but those impassioned prayers which rise "out of the deep" of our misery and weakness, by the power of the HOLY GHOST, with much endurance?

Let no one who is this Lent, perhaps, for the first time, walking carefully in the narrow way, be offended at the seeming hardness of JESUS' saying, and "walk no more with Him." If you really love JESUS, no saying of His will offend you. His commandments are not grievous to the sincere and loving soul. "He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." His "yoke is easy, and His burden light," because He carries them for you. Remember what has been done by saints of old, and is recorded for our encouragement. Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Elias, David and Manasseh, were men of like passions with ourselves; Hannah and Esther, Mary Magdalene and the woman of Canaan were weak and compassed with infirmity: but they prayed earnestly and untiringly, and wrought deliverance on the earth.

The disciples who could not watch with JESUS one hour, and fell asleep in His agony, continued after the gift of Pentecost stedfastly, fast holding on to the breaking of bread and the prayers. S. Paul, as a Jew, could not have prayed for three whole days, as he did when he believed in CHRIST, and was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: he could not have obeyed his own exhortation in the text. But the power of CHRIST rested on him; the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwelt *in* him, as in each

of us, and he could boast, "I can do all things through CHRIST strengthening me."

If then any here is convinced from what has been said, that GOD does require more of his time for devotion, and has faith to believe that what GOD commands He will enable us to perform, let him resolve without delay to take one step forward. That step, if taken in faith, firmly and deliberately, will be the planting of an Angel's foot on Jacob's ladder. If repeated and persevered in, it will carry him to heaven. Let him to his morning and evening prayers add some settled time between for regular devotions: let him pray thrice a day, beginning now in Lent, and by Easter he will have gained *a habit* for the rest of life. Thrice a day, my brethren, for private prayer, is surely not a burdensome rule, whatever be our position or calling. It was Daniel's rule in Babylon, and like a law of the Medes and Persians, it altered not. No pleasures of Babylonian society allured him from his closet; no threats of princes overawed or made him ashamed; no cares of office, as the Prime Minister of a mighty empire, administering one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, were deemed sufficient to excuse him from waiting so long upon his GOD.

Others, who are wont already to pray as often as Daniel, I would urge to set apart some additional time at the third, sixth, or ninth hour for further devotion, at least during this season. Let others more advanced take all these hours.[1] "How," says an ancient Bishop,[2] "can we do less than three times in the day at least (besides morning and evening, which will of themselves

[1] See note at the end of the Sermon.

[2] Quoted in Plain Sermons, Vol. III.

invite us to prayer) fall down and worship the Blessed TRINITY, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST?"

Further, if any one now plainly sees that besides prayer in the day, our LORD and His Apostles urge us to pray in the night, rising to pray, watching for that very purpose, and continuing in prayer with thanksgiving, let such an one first of all ask GOD in earnest prayer for the *will* and the *power* to watch, or do with less sleep, in order to pray. Then let him begin in all humility, as a learner, and acquire this habit little by little; at first attempting nothing above his strength, being satisfied with one quarter of an hour or half an hour at the most; and then increasing gently, as he has strength and will *granted him* to go on. Let him do this *with thanksgiving*; that is, thanking GOD for His gift of prayer, praying for its increase, and thanking GOD for that increase; holding fast to earnest prayer, and interweaving a thread of thanksgiving throughout its entire length. Let him go on thus praying in the HOLY GHOST as *in a Shechinah*, watching as in an atmosphere of thanksgiving, praying for the Gift, using the Gift, stirring up the Gift; holding on fast, thanking GOD for his hold, then praying again with a tightened hold; and such an one will find, if I mistake not, as he goes on, that unconsciously he has been evoking hidden powers of the spiritual life within him; that he has gained a new habit of devotion, become "strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might," able to do all things through CHRIST strengthening him.

Such an one will find he has power with GOD, and can prevail; that whatsoever he asks in faith without wavering he will receive; that he can intercede for the guilty city and save some; that he can win ac-

ceptance for his friends, baffle enemies, silence gainsayers, open heaven, cause the sun to shine, bring down showers of blessing, heal the sick, succour the dying, give sight to the blind, make the dumb speak, convert the sinful, restore the penitent, comfort the mourner, speak a word in due season to the weary and heavy laden, spread the Gospel, defend the truth, bring back wanderers to the fold, repair the breaches of Zion, give unity and peace to distracted Christendom.

He will discover that the secret of all prevailing intercession is earnestness, endurance. He will no longer deem an Apostle's words unreal, but will himself be able to pray in the SPIRIT at all seasons, with all prayers and supplication, watching thereunto with all fast holding on, and supplication for all saints, all sinners, all sorts and conditions of men. He will then be enabled to pass through each Ember Season with a real purpose, a definite aim, a resolute will to watch and pray for all those who by their office watch and pray for other souls as well as, ay, often more than, instead of, their own. He will seek to strengthen their hands, lighten their sorrows, compel them to open their mouths for the preaching of the mysteries of CHRIST, so as never to speak in vain.

This, my brethren, I would intreat you of your charity now to do for all the clergy, but especially your own (not forgetting one who has had the privilege of speaking to you this evening,) more earnestly, more enduringly. If S. Paul begged the prayers of his converts to support him under the load of his ministry, and give him boldness in preaching the Gospel, can *we* do without yours? Indeed we greatly need your most earnest, constant prayers to save ourselves and all to

whom we are sent. S. Chrysostom expresses his fears that very few priests will be saved. S. Paul himself feared he might be a castaway. And who are we, what are our lives, what is our work, in comparison of the faith, and love, and self-sacrifice of the saints, that we should not also fear greatly?

S. Paul and the early missionaries converted whole nations to the faith of CHRIST: we, my brethren, bring in but few of the perishing thousands; we find it hard, oh, how hard, to edify one saint! What is one ground of our own peril, or one reason of our inability to win souls to the love of their Redeemer? Why, over and above our own personal shortcomings, lukewarmness, lack of faith, *your* prayers are wanting that we may be like S. Paul, may open our mouths and preach *boldly*, as we ought to speak.

Pray especially for this great, this necessary gift of *boldness:* pray that all men now going to be ordained may so "use the office of a deacon well," that they "may purchase to themselves . . . . great *boldness* in the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS:" pray that all others, Priests and Bishops, may speak the Word *with all boldness*, so that it may have free course and be glorified; pray that the truth may be plainly spoken, vice impartially rebuked, the faith maintained without compromise, the Church enlarged, her full Catholic system set forth in its real attractiveness, the whole Body of CHRIST edified. So praying, brethren, you shall save many souls, your own as well as a great company of priests and preachers: your prayers shall all return into your own bosom, you shall partake of the glory of those who turn many to righteousness, and shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Only *wait* upon the LORD; hold fast to prayer, and He will renew your strength. You "shall mount up with wings as eagles," you "shall run and not be weary," you "shall walk and not faint."

C. G.

NOTE.

SHORT PRAYERS FOR DIFFERENT TIMES IN THE DAY,
(besides the daily Morning and Evening Prayers.)

If possible, retire to some private place, and there kneeling down, with closed eyes, make an act of Faith on the Presence of GOD, *such as the following:*

Thou GOD seest me. My GOD, I believe Thee to be present within my soul. Help me to fear and reverence Thy Majesty; and to serve Thee acceptably with all my heart; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

Then say,

LORD, have mercy upon us.
CHRIST, have mercy upon us.
LORD, have mercy upon us.

Our FATHER, &c.

Then add the following Prayers.

At Nine o'clock, or the Third Hour.

With special remembrance of children, godchildren, or brothers and sisters: and for the visible unity of the Church.

O Thou, Who at the Third Hour didst send down the HOLY GHOST upon Thine Apostles; take not away Thy HOLY SPIRIT from us, but renew Him daily in our hearts,

And save us, Good LORD.

O merciful GOD, grant that all carnal affections may die in me, and that all things belonging to the SPIRIT may live and grow in me. Amen.

Grant that I may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world and the flesh. Amen.

HYMN.

Come, HOLY GHOST, Who ever One
Art with the FATHER and the SON;
Come, HOLY GHOST, our souls possess
With Thy full flood of Holiness.

Let mouth, and heart, and flesh combine
To herald forth our Creed divine;
And Love so wrap our mortal frame,
Others may catch the living flame.

This Grace on Thy redeemed confer,
FATHER of Love, co-equal SON,
And HOLY GHOST the Comforter,
One GOD, Eternal Three in One.

Glory be to the FATHER, &c.

At Twelve o'clock, or the Sixth Hour.

More especially on behalf of sick, afflicted, and tempted members of CHRIST'S ***Body: and for the conversion of sinners.***

O Thou, Who at the Sixth hour didst nail the sins of the world to the Cross with Thyself; Blot out our offences,

And save us, Good LORD.

O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed me, save me and help me, I humbly beseech Thee, O LORD. Amen.

O Blessed JESU, give me the gift of Thy holy Love, pardon of all my sins, and grace to persevere unto the end. Amen.

HYMN.

O LORD of truth, and boundless power,
Who guidest every changing hour,
Thine is the early dawn of light,
And Thine the summer's noon-day bright.

Oh, quench the flames of wrath and hate,
Sin's fever in our souls abate;
Defend our bodies, and impart
Unclouded peace to every heart.

FATHER of mercy, hear us pray;
Co-equal SON, turn not away:
Hear, HOLY SPIRIT, ever-blest—
Three Persons in One GOD confessed!

Glory be to the FATHER, &c.

At Three o'clock, or the Ninth Hour.

And forget not the dying; remembering too the faithful departed: and pray for the establishment of the righteous.

O Thou, Who at the Ninth hour for us sinners and for our sins didst taste death; mortify our members which are upon the earth, and whatsoever is contrary to Thy Holy Will,

And save us, Good LORD.

O LORD GOD most Holy, O LORD most Mighty, O Holy and most merciful SAVIOUR, Thou most worthy Judge Eternal; Suffer me not, at my last hour, for any pains of death to fall from Thee. Amen.

O most loving JESU, by Thine Agony and precious Death, deliver me from the pains of Hell, and vouchsafe me rest in Paradise, with all Thy Saints. Amen.

HYMN.

O GOD, the life and strength of all,
On Thy Eternal Throne,
The hours obey Thy silent call,
And vanish one by one.

Grant us at eventide such light
As never shall die down,
The heavenly prize, unfading bright,
A holy death to crown.

This Grace on Thy redeemed confer,
FATHER, co-equal SON,
And HOLY GHOST, the Comforter,
Eternal Three in One.

Glory be to the FATHER, &c.

SERMON XVIII.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

S. JOHN XIX. 27.

"BEHOLD THY MOTHER."

OF the three Sayings of our Blessed LORD on the Cross, which He uttered more immediately for the sake of others, perhaps none comes so thoroughly home to us regenerate Christians, as men, as the last of the three, which S. John alone has been inspired to record, the words of the Son of Man to the Beloved Disciple, "Behold thy Mother." From the hour in which they were spoken, all these Sayings have formed the spiritual nourishment of devout and holy minds, both for meditation and contemplation, in all ages of the world. Each of them possesses its own peculiar virtue, its own special benefit; and they all affect us in distinct and different ways. For example: as sinners, justified and redeemed by the All-Holy Blood of JESUS, we may hopefully cling to the ceaseless Intercession of CHRIST'S Kingly Mediation for the remission of sins, in the words which, though uttered in time, are still being repeated—"FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Or as

penitents, baptised indeed, but fallen, and again by Infinite Mercy from time to time renewed through the grace of repentance, and now working onwards to become Saints; we may grasp with confidence the promise made by our Great High Priest, from the Altar of His Cross, of an Intermediate State of Repose with CHRIST, which only falls short of the fulness of perfect bliss in the Beatific Vision, in the words—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." But as men, as sons and daughters of flesh and blood, as those who have known the love of a mother, the depth of the human affection, which amidst the awful bodily sufferings of Golgotha, and the still more fearful spiritual agonies of that dread scene,—the reality of that perfect Manhood which, if we may venture to say so, could thus divest Itself of all that concerned Itself, and could utter, with almost dying breath, the simple, touching words—"Behold thy Mother," comes home to us, as men, more nearly than even the accents of hope to pardoned sinners, or than the promised state of blissful anticipation to the saintly penitent.

Little as some persons are disposed to admit the fact, a very slight consideration will suffice to show that the third Saying of our Blessed LORD on Calvary forms no exception, in its principle of application, to the other six. These living words of JESUS are on all hands admitted to be more or less of world-wide importance to the members of the Crucified. But unless it be allowed that, of the seven last words, there is but one true system of interpretation, we shall be forced to account for a passing strange anomaly with reference to these Sayings. We shall have to explain how it comes to pass, that when it pleased the Eternal SON to open His Sa-

cred Lips seven times during His three hours' suffering, Human and Divine, He spake six times with the special intention that His words be used until the end of time, He spake once with the same deliberate intention that they never be employed again. We should be obliged to find a reason, that we may be permitted to employ His words as our King, our High Priest, our Divine Victim, the Conqueror of Death, the Captain of our Salvation, and the First Fruits of the Resurrection; and the reason, that we are forbidden to make them ours when He speaks as the Son of Man. No, my brethren, this may not be. We may not pick and choose our Blessed LORD'S words at our will and pleasure. We may not leave one and take another; but if any of the Sayings are interpreted in the spirit of the Ancient Church, all must be held in accordance with such teaching. Hence, the third Saying of JESUS to the Disciple whom JESUS loved, cannot be separated from the other six last words of CHRIST. All must stand or fall together; and it is in the firmest faith in the fact that one and all of JESUS' words were not only spoken, but were Divinely placed upon record, and were miraculously handed down by Holy Church for the special benefit of every individual Christian man and woman, that I venture now to direct your attention to the words spoken primarily in behalf of Mary, "Behold thy Mother."

Now, it being granted that the words of the text not only are applicable to, but are also binding upon, us who live in times when faith hath waxed cold; let us endeavour to ascertain, with the assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT, and by the guidance of just men made perfect, what is the evangelical meaning of the words, "Behold

thy Mother," and what may be legitimately enforced from such meaning.

In the first place, then, the words, "Behold thy Mother," cannot be made to mean less than they declare. Beyond all doubt, they may not be forced to signify that we should look upon the Blessed Virgin in a light less reverential than that of Mother. It were little short of profanity to suppose that at so solemn a time, words could be uttered, by Him Who spake them, in an unmeaning or unreal sense. And if we may not suppose that the beloved Apostle received them otherwise than they were spoken; we cannot imagine that he would have been inspired to perpetuate these words for our "instruction in righteousness," in any but their plain and grammatical sense. Our Blessed LORD therefore, intended not that we should honour His Virgin Mother with a veneration less deep than we pay to our earthly parent.

But Mary is something more to the true Christian man and woman. She is something higher and holier, be the reverence due to those who brought us forth never so high, never so holy. She is something nearer and dearer, even whilst more and more removed above us, to all who think not to gain the approval of the Divine SON by disputing the claims of the Human Mother. And here, at the threshold of the matter, we encounter a difficulty which it is the better plan frankly to allow; and by allowing, to overpass. We stand upon avowedly difficult ground, which by GOD'S Grace, need not be dangerous. Now on the subject of Mary's position in the Kingdom of GOD, some have undoubtedly said far too much, and some have as certainly said much too little. Hence, the difficulty is twofold; and, blessed

be God, may be made self-suicidal. For there must ever be a truth anterior to either exaggeration or disparagement. And the case of this chiefest of Saints is no exception to the general rule. There must be a position in the Kingdom of Grace which the Ever-Virgin Mother occupies, which is impregnable to those who would scale the walls on the one hand; or to those, on the other, who would sap the foundations. Nor should the faithful Christian shrink from holding this position, when it is found. The false notion so prevalent that *that* may not be used which is liable to be abused, is most pernicious and soul-destroying. Worldly people are fully conscious of this. In things of the world, all worldly persons are agreed upon this,—one of the first principles of social ethics. In many matters of religion, religious persons are frequently not less in unison. But the mistake into which religious people fall is to employ their theory but in part. Let us, however, my brethren, be consistent. Let us not be frightened into omitting to cultivate devout reverence for the Mother of God, simply because some have ventured to pass beyond the bounds of reverence.

And what are the legitimate bounds of reverence for the Maiden Mother of Christ, to which we may approach? What are the feelings with which we not only may, but must,—if we would be right loyal to the Holy Child Jesus,—behold the Holy Virgin, "Daughter of her Son?" To answer these questions, with confidence, we must speak in the words of those who have held closest to the teaching of the Church. It is altogether useless, however, to quote from ancient authorities on this subject; for I suppose most persons are agreed as to the reverential regard of the Fathers for Blessed Mary.

Rather, it is needful, for our present purpose to meditate in the spirit, if not in the words, of those in more modern times, who have not undeservedly won the confidence of that Branch of the Church whose ornaments they form.

First of all, let us listen to the words of one whose works are held in such high esteem at the present day as to be required, when mastered, at the hands of candidates for Holy Orders—I mean the works of Bishop Pearson. And it is much to be noted that these words are taken from a calm and patient Theological Treatise. There is no poetry about them; there is no exaggeration; there is nothing which at all breathes of metaphor, nothing which bears the impress of inflated or hyperbolical language; and consequently nothing which may be watered down, or explained away, from its natural sense, save by the grossest dishonesty. There they stand, an imperishable monument of what a British Bishop has said and published, of what British Bishops continue to ratify and endorse. "Far be it," says Bishop Pearson, "far be it from any Christian to derogate from that special privilege granted unto" the "Most Immaculate and Blessed Virgin," "which is incommunicable to any other." And he adds, "We cannot bear a too reverent regard unto the Mother of our LORD, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the LORD Himself." To these deliberate and well-weighed words of the learned Bishop agree the prayerful aspirations of the saintly Prelate Andrewes, whose Devotions so many of us are wont to use every day of our lives. He bids us commend ourselves to CHRIST our GOD; and we, who pray in his words, do thus commend ourselves, "making mention

of the All-Holy, Undefiled, and Most Blessed Mary, Mother of GOD, and Ever-Virgin." Neither do the sentiments of good Bishop Hall appear to be out of harmony with the devotions or opinions of these other writers of the English Church. Bishop Hall combines the fervour of Andrewes with the dogmatic precision of Pearson, when he thus addresses her whom an Archangel saluted: "O Blessed Mary, he cannot bless thee, he cannot honour thee too much, that deifies thee not!" Lastly, to give but another example,—where others might be quoted,—of the tone and language of some of our best Divines, whose writings lead them to speak of the Holy Mary; Bishop Jolly declares that the Blessed Virgin Mother is "undoubtedly the most highly exalted and honoured of all creatures, . . . and certainly the highest honour that can be paid to a creature is due to her."

And to what do these few extracts, after all, amount? To what but to a mere acknowledgment, and nothing more, of the everlasting truth of S. Gabriel's announcement; of the continuity, as long as time exists, of S. Elisabeth's Salutation; of the perpetual fulfilment of Mary's own prophetic Hymn, which the Church never ceases daily to offer up, as incense before a thousand Altars: "Behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me Blessed!" They amount to this: that to this extent are we bound to honour her whom the King of kings delighted to honour, and to reverence her whom Almighty GOD Himself hath pronounced Blessed —that the highest honour that can be paid to a creature is to be paid to Mary; that he cannot honour or bless her too much, that deifies her not; that her proper style and title is All-Holy, Undefiled, Most Blessed,

and Immaculate, who is verily and indeed the Mother of GOD, and Ever-Virgin; and that we cannot bear too reverent a regard unto the Mother of JESUS, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the SON of Mary.

My brethren, it is somewhere written by the Inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, that whoso shall not receive the Kingdom of GOD as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And it seems to me to be one of the crucial tests of a simple, unquestioning, childlike faith, whether or not one who seeking that Kingdom, has a present prospect of admittance there, that he accepts literally and heartily—as spoken to himself—the injunction contained in these few words, "Behold thy Mother." For, let me ask, in the case of all of us when children, and of many of us when we have ceased to be children, do not our earthly mothers occupy almost the identical position here claimed for the Blessed Virgin? As children, without all doubt, our mothers well-nigh stand towards us in the place of GOD Almighty. He has entrusted them with the spiritual training of those who hereafter shall be Saints. He has delegated to them so much of His Authority as, in ordinary cases, will determine whether those confided to their care shall be found at the last amongst the lost, or amongst the saved. To them we are indebted for our earliest and deepest religious faith. To them we owe the germs of those impressions which afterwards are petrified into the most abiding convictions. We receive implicitly, and with no questioning, all they teach us; as we *now* see, in Faith, and upon Authority; just as in after years we receive with similar childish sincerity higher and yet higher teaching from our Holy Mother Church. This

is most surely true of childhood. And even if in later years, from one cause or another, we outrun our first instructress, we still look back with the profoundest reverence upon the memory of one who has done for our souls such great things; and we still remember by whose teaching the foundation of that building was laid, without which the present edifice could never have been raised. And of those who have thus taught our infant lips to lisp the Prayer, and our little heads to bow at the Name, of JESUS, is it too much to say that to us, in our early and less tainted years, they occupy a place in our hearts which no other created being can fill; is it too much to own, that we cannot honour or bless them sufficiently, that we cannot bear them too reverent a regard, as long as we deify them not, nor give them that worship which is due only unto the Only GOD?

If this picture at all comes up to the idea with which little children only do not idolise their earthly mothers, out of the superabundance of natural affection, it is but an image—and a very faint image I readily admit—of the way in which our spiritual affection should gush out towards the All-Holy Maiden Mother of our LORD. For just consider, my brethren, for a single moment, what claims upon our affections has this pre-eminently exalted Saint, over and above those to whom we usually accord this all-endearing title, Mother. To her we are indebted in time, for the accomplishment of that which the Ever-Blessed TRINITY designed from all eternity. To her was offered the privilege of becoming the Instrument by which the most stupendous miracle—a miracle before which all others pale—was accomplished, the astounding privilege of acting in concert with GOD for the Redemption of man. By her, the

choice of becoming the Mother of GOD was accepted; and though with absolute free-will, yet not apart from prophetic anticipation and anxious expectation from the date of Adam's fall, until the times of restitution in the Annunciation of S. Gabriel. Nor can we suppose that Almighty GOD was indifferent to the fitness of the "Blessed Conduit through which should pass the Mystery of Man's" Salvation: for, as has been said, by some in "those first and purer times," "GOD was almost fifty ages in the meditation of this stately Palace;" and "there be who affirm, that whatever the Creator saw beautiful in Heaven or earth, He bestowed in the "limning of this rare Piece, not that she might be styled the most fair amongst the daughters of women, but by a heavenly prerogative the alone fair, the alone lovely." Whether or not this be considered a pious opinion, there is much relating to S. Mary quite beyond the range of controversy, sufficient to ensure our deepest gratitude, our highest veneration. For instance, did not the Eternal SON take upon Him Flesh of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance? Did not Mary brood over the mortal part of her Immortal Offspring, as His members "day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them?" Did not Mary bring forth JESUS, our GOD, in the stable of Bethlehem? Was not to her entrusted the helpless Infancy of the "Holy Child," the tender Youth, the early Manhood? Did she escape the ceaseless anxiety, the constant care of so Infinite a Charge? From Mary, did not He vouchsafe to receive nourishment, support, and protection, Who needs no protection, Who upholds the world, Who creates the nourishment with which He is sustained? For thirty years, was not He in subjection to her, and chiefly known to the little world of

Judaism as the SON of Mary? At length, when He took upon Himself His three years' painful Ministry, we do not fail to find Mary at its commencement, in its progress, at its close. She was at Cana, and at the marriage feast. She waited on her Incarnate GOD, in His wanderings and teachings, according to her opportunity. Nor at the last sad scene of Calvary was she absent. Then it was, in those last few hours of the earthly life of JESUS, in the very death struggle of the SON of GOD, not long before He committed His Spotless SPIRIT into the Hands of His Heavenly FATHER—then it was that Mary was beside the Cross; then it was that the Crucified ONE bequeathed His most precious and only earthly Legacy to the Beloved Disciple; then it was that CHRIST said to every one of us who stand by Mary, and who listen with Saint John, "Behold thy Mother."

And, O my brethren, shall we not accept this bequest? Shall we not avail ourselves of this proffered gift? Shall we not take what JESUS gives, CHRIST'S natural Mother, the adopted Mother of the Blessed John, the spiritual Mother of each true-hearted member of the Crucified? Surely, my brethren, with GOD'S good help, we will accept the legacy. We will take His Mother to be our Mother, thankfully, affectionately, without reserve, and with much humility. We will take her and own her as our own, notwithstanding the world's active opposition, notwithstanding the negative assent of those "who profess and call themselves Christians." The world may say harsh things, and things hard to bear. It may insinuate false and untrue things, which it cannot prove, and of which we are entirely guiltless. Religious persons also may speak against

us. They may hint at caution, and deprecate extremes, and advise moderation. But, please GOD, we at least will be genuine and consistent Christians. We will admit of no moderation on this side the Truth. That shall only be extreme to us, which misapplies what we are commanded to use. In CHRIST'S Strength we will legitimately employ what may be, what has been perverted. We will not be afraid to think and feel towards Mary that which Holy Men and Saints, in all ages, have gloried to feel and think towards her; nor will we shrink from avowing, and if needs be from suffering, in the petty persecutions of the present day, for our convictions in respect of the Mother of GOD. We will reverence Mary, as the Catholic Church in the purest times reverenced her. We will honour Mary, as the Ancient Church honoured her. We will love Mary, as the Primitive Church loved her. Aye, we will love, honour, and reverence her as the most holy, and not the least able of the Divines of our own Branch of the Church Catholic have been permitted to account of this Blessed One of all creation. And we will do all this with our finger on the page of the Book of Life, at the words of Gabriel the Archangel, at the Salutation of the wife of Zacharias, at the prophetic Canticle of CHRIST'S Own Virgin Mother, and at the dying Words, of our dearest LORD Himself from the Tree of Shame, to the Beloved Disciple,—"Behold thy Mother."

Bearing in mind, then, the canons given us by Prelates of our Church, by which to regulate our belief in the position occupied by the Mother of GOD in the Kingdom of Grace, we shall now enter into the feelings with which purer ages reverenced and did honour to this chiefest of Saints. We shall now realise, more truly than hereto-

fore, the language of former times, when they found, and applied to Mary texts, scattered up and down the Holy Bible, which either originally, or in a secondary sense, are prophetic of the story of the Maiden Mother of our Blessed LORD. In Mary we shall see fulfilled the earliest extant Prophecy relating to the Divine Seed of the Woman: nor shall we close our eyes to the latest recorded Vision, wherein appears a Woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. In Mary we shall behold the Mystic Gate, for ever shut, through which the LORD GOD hath entered, a Creature into His Own Creation.

In her we shall perceive a still more marvellous Burning Bush, which was not consumed, than Moses saw; a more "beauteous Throne" than Solomon erected; a Rod which worked greater marvels than that of Moses; a Fleece that showed more clearly than that of Gideon, that GOD worked with man; the Tabernacle which more truly contained the Bread of Angels, than the Ark of the Covenant of old; the sealed Fountain; the enclosed Garden; the spotless Lily; the Cedar of Libanus; the Tree of Life; and the House of Gold. Here we shall stop. We shall bestow great honour to whom honour is due. We shall love and reverence whom the SON of GOD not only reverenced and loved, but also for thirty years condescended to obey. We shall do so, both for the sake of the Mother who was Parent to the SON, and for the sake of the SON Who was Child to the Mother. We shall think of her, meditate upon her, examine her words and works, ponder on her dignity, imitate her example, and emulate her zeal. We shall do all this; but we will do no more. For although we

place her above all created beings, we know that she stands beneath her SON; although Mary is Mother of GOD, yet GOD is the Creator of Mary; although Mary brought forth JESUS, yet JESUS redeemed and saved His Human Mother. Hence our worship, our adoration, our devotion will be entirely, unhesitatingly, and undividedly given to our Blessed LORD Alone; nor will we deny Him our highest honour, our deepest reverence, our purest love, and our most tender affection. Anything, however, short of this, we will rejoice to pay to His Sacred Mother, not "grudgingly, nor of necessity," but willingly and with a glad heart, from the overflowings of our attachment, which wells out from our very selves towards our dearest Master. Thus will we give to Mary the highest honour that can be paid to a creature. Thus will we reverence Mary with a regard which falls short of the worship due unto her SON. Thus will we bless Mary with a love which becomes not adoration. And thus will we act up to the words of CHRIST JESUS our LORD, "Behold thy Mother."

In conclusion, I would only suggest two practical ways, where many might be mentioned, in which we may act up to the spirit of CHRIST'S dying words. The injunction, "Behold thy Mother," involves (1.) practical reverence for the honour, and (2.) practical imitation of the example of the chiefest Saint. We must, therefore, in the first place, ever strive to speak of, and think about Mary, as the Mother of GOD, and Ever Virgin; to make those that are hesitating on the borders of true reverence for the Mother of JESUS, pass completely over to the side of the Catholic Church; to let no opportunity slip by, where GOD'S greater Glory is not risked, of upholding Christian Truth, on this subject, against all posi-

tive gainsayers. No breach of charity need be involved in such a course; though doubtless we shall be tempted to be angry, and yet sin not, when we converse either with those who are blessed with less light than ourselves, or with those who, having had similar opportunities, have neglected them. Especially on one subject is there much need of dogmatic assertion of Catholic Tradition at the present day, and that is on the fact which the words, the Perpetual Virginity of "our Lady," call to mind. Thank GOD, the common style and title of Mary, which even those who deny the Truth are still as it were constrained, inconsistently, to use,—The Virgin,—is a standing protest against such fearful disrespect. Still this heresy, notwithstanding universal testimony, and the complete demolition of its human reasoning at the hands of learned men,[1] is yet rampant amongst us; and hence it requires the charitable zeal of the able, and the zealous charity of the humble Christian, to repress the contaminating influence of this hideous falsity.

But if we are bound to reverence CHRIST'S Mother for His sake and that of S. Mary, we are not less bound, in the second place, to follow her excellency for His sake and our own. She will then be doubly honoured, and we shall be doubly blessed; and CHRIST'S Kingdom

[1] Amongst others, Bishop Pearson. The revolting theory here hinted at, has lately received what will probably prove to be, from the popularity of the volume which endorses it, a wide-spread encouragement. The Article on "our LORD'S Brethren," in Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, supports the most degrading view of this sacred subject, at the hands of one from whom was expected better things. After Bishop Pearson's crushing reply to sceptics of his day, the paper in question is simply presumptuous. The superficiality of the argument by which the writer's private opinion is supported, is only equalled by the grossness of the conception by which it could ever have been entertained, and the absence of delicacy with which it is enunciated.

will be proportionately advanced. Nor need we go beyond the range of the present subject to find sufficient matter for imitation in Mary's conduct, as the Mother of our LORD. Let us, then, my brethren, follow her bright example in this single relation of life. Let us beget CHRIST in our hearts—even in the Sacrament of the Most Blessed Eucharist—as Mary conceived Him of her substance. Let us produce CHRIST in good works, as Mary brought Him forth in Bethlehem. Let us devote our lives to His service, as Mary devoted thirty years to her labour of love. Let us wait on Him, as she waited; let us hang on His words, as she listened to, and treasured them; let us anticipate His wishes, as she forestalled and expected them. Lastly, let us, as she did, stand beside His Cross, and watch and see what our dearest LORD has done and suffered for our sakes. It may be that, if day by day we watch with Mary beside the ignominious, yet most glorious Cross; if we meditate day by day on some one single point of CHRIST'S priceless Passion,—of His all-sufficient Sufferings; if we contemplate, each in its turn, a different side of His Infinite Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: it may be that some blessed day, not long hence, it may please our Adorable LORD to make us to realise fully what we now know only in part; it may please Him to fill our hearts with comfort, peace, and joy, by unfolding to us the mystery of perfect Union with our Incarnate GOD, by which alone we can understand the deeper meaning of the words, "Behold thy Mother."

O. S.

SERMON XIX.

THE STRAIT GATE.

S. LUKE XIII. 23, 24.

"THEN SAID ONE UNTO HIM, LORD, ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED? AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE: FOR MANY, I SAY UNTO YOU, WILL SEEK TO ENTER IN, AND SHALL NOT BE ABLE."

WE are not told who this "one" was, by whom the question in the text was put to our LORD, nor the exact circumstances which gave rise to it, nor are we informed in what spirit the questioner came with his question. But at any rate it was a question, which our LORD did not think well to answer, though He nevertheless, as was His wont, embraced the opportunity of giving some practical instruction in reply. It would have done the questioner no good to know whether few or many would be saved, especially as he seems to have made the inquiry without any special reference to himself, or his own duties to GOD and man; but it *would* do him good to know how best he might "work out his own salvation," so that he might be among the saved at last, and thus (as I said) he gets no answer from our LORD such as he expected, but he *does* get an answer such as it was better for him to have.

What then is the nature of our LORD's reply? The general nature of our LORD's reply seems to be this. He does not say as on a former occasion that the saved are few—few, i.e., in comparison with the whole, for they are in reality "a great multitude, which no man could number."[1] This He had expressly declared in His Sermon on the Mount.[2] "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." But here He insinuates by His silence, that the knowledge would be profitless at least to this inquirer, and those who were with him. And yet, though He does not in this place assert that the saved will be few, He does assert, as before, that the gate is strait, and so that diligence and earnestness are needed to find it, and enter into it. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

And next He gives *the reason why* all should strive. And that reason is of a two-fold kind, the first *positive*, the second *negative*. "Strive ye," all of you (ἀγωνίζεσθε) because all *may* enter in, as is implied in the very command; but take heed that ye do *strive;* for "many shall *seek* to enter in and shall not be able." They "shall not be able" if they simply seek listlessly and lazily, (ver. 24,) not striving and agonizing with their might. They "shall not be able," if they strive not to renounce all evil, for the "workers of iniquity" shall be thrust out (ver. 27). They "shall not be able," if they seek to enter in by any but the strait gate, if they attempt an entrance by any other way seemingly smoother and easier; for mark that, though our LORD says,

[1] Rev. vii. 9. [2] S. Matt. vii. 13.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate," He does not say that "many shall strive to enter" *at the strait gate*, "and shall not be able." Or lastly, they "shall not be able," if they do not strive *at once*, for "many shall seek to enter in," when it is too late, when the time for admission is past—"when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, LORD, LORD, open to us, and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." (Verse 25.)

But still further, our LORD having shown them how many should seek to enter in, and for various reasons should not be able, proceeds to utter a solemn warning against the self-deception, of which, as it seems, the questioner and his friends were the victims. Many (He says,) will ultimately be shut out, who will fancy themselves quite safe—"Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in Thy Presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Verses 26, 27.) And not only does He reprove their false notions as to their own safety, but also the notions which they in their pride entertained regarding the exclusion of others. He shows how not only will there be in the kingdom of GOD those, whom they perhaps might have expected to find there, but that when they themselves are cast out, some will be admitted, whom they despised and thought all in the wrong. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the kingdom of GOD, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall

sit down in the kingdom of GOD." (Ver. 28, 29.) And in the thirtieth verse He sounds a fresh and more penetrating trumpet-blast of warning. "And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last;" and thus (though it is not actually repeated) we come back to that which is the key-note of the whole answer —"STRIVE."

The chief object then of our LORD'S answer to this questioner seems to have been to give a practical turn to his theoretical question, and to draw him and all away from profitless questioning to an earnest striving after eternal life. And here let us notice in the first place, how frequently our LORD rebukes curious questions, which are not unto edifying. Inquiries which are purely of a speculative nature, and are the mere result of idle curiosity, receive no answer from our LORD; or rather, as here, the answer which is given has a tendency to turn the thoughts of the questioner into a practical channel. Thus in S. John xxi. 20, after our LORD had figuratively foretold S. Peter's death by crucifixion, S. Peter inquires regarding S. John, "LORD, and what shall this man do?" He seems to have thought it strange that while he himself was to suffer martyrdom, "the disciple whom JESUS loved," and "who also leaned on His Breast at Supper," should not also be invested with the same crown. And JESUS does not directly answer him, but says, "If I will that he tarry till I come"—if I will that he should not pass through the glorious gate of martyrdom, but "tarry till I come," tarry on, patiently waiting for Me in the appointed time to come and fetch him,—"What is that to thee?" Your practical duty is plain—"Follow thou Me." And thus our LORD here too discourages the in-

quiry regarding another. He calls S. Peter away from his speculations as to another's business, and bids him mind his own. Nor is it an unlikely suggestion that the Apostle had this rebuke of our LORD in his mind, when he afterwards in one of his Epistles bids no one to be a "busybody in other men's matters."[1]

And do we not also, brethren, need to keep this rebuke in our minds at the present day? How very anxious people are to set others right; to find fault with their mode of serving GOD; to ask questions as to their creed, or their religious state! And perhaps they may feel aggrieved if they get no such answer as they expect; and yet some answer they ought surely to have, an answer which may admonish them that what our LORD requires is not speculation, but practice; not so much protestations against other men's religion, as carefulness about their own; not criticism of others' worship, but diligence about their own. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me."

Again, it is somewhat in the same manner that our LORD replies to the inquiry of the lawyer, "Who is my neighbour?"[2] He had put the question from a desire "to justify himself,"[3] and perhaps (as is often the case with those who question much, when they do little), with the view of avoiding the practical and personal application of our LORD's words: "This do, and thou shalt live." And how does JESUS answer him? The answer, such as He did give, was in the form of a parable, that of the good Samaritan; but you will find on examination that this does not afford any direct reply to the inquiry at all. Our LORD does not tell him

[1] 1 S. Pet. v. 15. [2] S. Luke x. 25. [3] Verse 29.

who is his neighbour, but He shows him on the one hand a Priest and a Levite, who do not, and on the other a Samaritan, who does perform a true work of mercy to a wounded Jew, and thus He wrings from the lawyer the avowal that the Samaritan was a neighbour to the Jew because he *acted* as a neighbour; and inasmuch as neighbour is a reciprocal term, He leaves him to infer that the Jew must also be a neighbour to the Samaritan, and be bound therefore to bestow neighbourly treatment upon him. He knew that the object of the lawyer's question was to limit the extension of the law of love he had so correctly stated; and so JESUS teaches him by His answer that the question "Who is my neighbour?" was fundamentally a wrong one. Inquire not (He implies) who is thy neighbour with a view of limiting the number of those to whom acts of love should be shown, but ask "Who does, or who does not act a neighbour's part?" "Who is my neighbour?" asks the self-excusing lawyer, and our LORD does not tell him, except at least indirectly, but He presents to his conscience one who does his *duty* to his neighbour, and bids him "Go and do likewise."

Again, in S. Luke xvii. 37, our LORD had been speaking to His disciples of the very awful separations which shall take place at His Second Coming, when He shall come in the Body to judge all men for the things they have done in the body: "I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left." Upon this, they answered and said unto Him, "Where, LORD?" what shall be the place where all this shall be? And how does He answer the question? Does He tell them

where? No. He replies, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." He intimates that it would do them no good to know where all this shall take place, but He does tell them something it is good for them to know; He tells them *what sort of persons* will be there: "Wheresoever the Body of the LORD is, thither will *the eagles* (the true saints of GOD) be gathered together." The eagles will be there. Take heed therefore that you be among the eagles, among those "who fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven,"[1] who "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth,"[2] and then all will be well. Wheresoever "in the clouds" the human Body of the Incarnate SON is at His Second Advent, thither will *you*, with all other "eagles," all other saints of GOD be "gathered together." Thither shall *ye* be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall ye be ever with the LORD."[3]

Such then are a few examples of our LORD'S mode of replying to curious or unprofitable questions. And they all tend to teach us that if we are neglecting to do our own plain duty by "striving to enter in at the strait gate," we are only deceiving ourselves by showing a great deal of zeal about other men's religion, and by asking curious questions which have no direct influence upon our salvation.

We now return to the particular answer before us. And first notice here that in the command, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," it is implied that all may be able. Nay, as I have already intimated, this appears from the very wording: "Strive," and ye shall be able; but if ye only seek listlessly, or seek even earnestly to

[1] Gen. i. 20. [2] Coloss. iii. 2. [3] 1 Thess. iv. 17.

enter in by any other gate than the strait gate, or seek not while the gate is still open, ye "shall not be able." Here CHRIST plainly shows that the number of the saved is not limited by any arbitrary Divine decree, inasmuch as He calls upon all to "strive to enter in." It were mockery to bid all "strive," unless there were hope of success being the result of that striving. And so it is. For thus says the Prophet: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."[1] Every one is called, and to every one is promised the water of life freely, "without money and without price," without any merits or deservings on their own part, but only for the merits of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. "Buy (says He) without price," for He Who paid for us the price of His Own Blood sought no price from us."[2] And yet, though the offer is thus freely made, there nevertheless seems something paradoxical in the expression "Buy ye without money." No money is needed, nor can be brought, and yet there is to be a "buying." And what can this possibly signify, but that the water of life is offered to all freely, yet that it is in one sense to cost us something,—some labour, some self-denial, some struggling against the world, the flesh, and the devil, some prayer, some tears, some good works. In a word, the Prophet Isaiah in this gracious invitation sets forth two great parallel truths of CHRIST'S kingdom: one, that "it is not the will of our FATHER Which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish,"[3] but that salvation and the means of salvation are freely

[1] Isa. lv. 1.
[2] S. Amb. lib. de Josepho patriarcha.
[3] S. Matt. xviii. 14.

offered to all in CHRIST: the other is the truth our LORD utters in the text, namely, that none the less, if we would receive this great salvation, and be welcomed into the everlasting kingdom of GOD, we must in union with CHRIST, do something on our own parts. We must "buy the truth," with much labour, and zeal, and it may be loss of temporal goods, and worldly comforts; and we must "sell it not"[1] for any bribes of honour, or pleasure, or riches that this world can offer. We must, in other words, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

The "*gate*" here is not the gate of entrance into the kingdom of heaven—the Church upon earth—that kingdom which is likened unto a net, wherein are good and bad fishes;[2] but it is the entrance into that kingdom into which "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth."[3] And the "narrow way," of which our LORD speaks in the Sermon on the Mount, is the way leading to this "strait gate." In the highest sense CHRIST is this Way, as He says Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;"[4] but the expression must be understood to comprehend all that belongs to CHRIST—His faith, His doctrine, His grace, His law. And He, too, is the Gate through which alone we can enter in: "I am the Door; by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."[5] It is only by participation in the very substance of that Flesh, the "new and living way which He hath consecrated for us;"[6] it is only by partaking of the nature of CHRIST, and attaining thereby, in our degree, to His character, that we can obtain access into heaven. We must, in union with Him, strive to walk in the way of

[1] Prov. xxiii. 23. [2] S. Matt. xiii. 47. [3] Rev. xxi. 27.
[4] S. John xiv. 6. [5] S. John x. 9. [6] Heb. x. 20.

His Commandments in faith and love, and then we shall enter into the gate of eternal life. But we *must* "strive;" for this *gate is strait*—strait, not in itself, for thousands upon thousands and millions upon millions pass through, yet it is wide enough to admit millions more.

But this "gate" is "strait," in reference to us. When we are laden with sins unrepented of and unabsolved,—the sins of childhood, the sins of youth, the sins of manhood, the sins of old age,—then the gate is too "strait" to let us in. When the rich man comes loaded with the weight of all his riches, which he has piled up for himself, without disburdening any on his poorer brethren; when the poor man comes laden with the sins of discontent, and murmuring and complaining; when any come puffed up with pride and self-conceit, or weighed down with carnal lusts; then it is found that the gate is indeed *strait*, and that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle,"[1] than for such as these to enter in at it. And hence, when our LORD bids us "strive to enter in at the strait gate," He bids us in other words strive to keep pure from all sin, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to take heed lest the crushing burden of our sins of omission and sins of commission prevent our entrance.

And truly, brethren, have we not need to "strive," to "*agonise*" for this purpose? Who that has tried knows not how hard it is to keep free from all sin? Who has not need to watch and pray, not only against what are called little sins, but also against "presumptuous sins," lest they get the dominion over us? Who

[1] S. Matt. xix. 24.

knows not (if, at least, he has really tried) how hard it is to do all our duty to GOD and man day by day,—to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,"[1] —to frame our doings according to His will,—to "follow on to know the LORD,"[2]—to act, think, and speak as in His sight,—in a word, to carry out in the practice of our daily lives the precept of the Apostle, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS."[3] Oh, brethren, be assured that for this each one of us must strive. We must strive to *rule our tongues;* we must keep them from all evil speaking, lying, and slandering; we must indulge them in no scandal, or gossip, or idle talk, because for "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the Day of Judgment."[4] We must strive to *rule our eyes;* we must not suffer them to wander away after forbidden objects. We must not cast so much as a glance at the forbidden fruit, lest like Eve we desire it, and then take it. We must look away from all that is evil, and look up to Him Who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil or look on iniquity."[5] We must strive to *rule our hearts.* "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."[6] Our thoughts must never dwell on persons, or places, or things, which may be a snare to us. Our affections must never rest upon anything out of GOD, lest we go after other "lovers,"[7] and forget Him, our "first Husband," the "altogether lovely," and thus "provoke the LORD to jealousy." And we must strive the more earnestly, because we have to contend against many adversaries. We are engaged in a real conflict

[1] Eph. iv. 1. [2] Hosea vi. 3. [3] Coloss. iii. 17.
[4] S. Matt. xii. 36. [5] Habakkuk i. 13. [6] Prov. iv. 23.
[7] Hos. ii. 13.

against real foes. Not only have we to overcome the "false prophets," of whom our LORD tells us to "beware," but we have also, as S. Paul warns us, to "wrestle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."[1] And as the Apostle gives us this warning not to cast us down, but to rouse up our spirits as soldiers; so our LORD tells us the "way" is "narrow," and the "gate" is "strait," not to make us despair, but to shake us Christian travellers out of our sleep, and make us march manfully onwards. If the battle is formidable, there is the more reason that we should buckle on our armour, and quit us like men. If the way is rough and narrow, and the gate of entrance is strait, there is the more reason that we should "have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,"[2] and press forward unflinchingly to the end.

"For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Here He gives another reason for striving, because so many shall not be able to enter. "Many will seek," but not as that woman in the parable, who "sought *diligently*" for her lost piece of money, sweeping the house, regardless of dust and confusion, and not resting till she found it.[3] Or "many will seek," but in by-ways and circuitous paths of their own, not in the right and true way of the LORD; and thus they "will not be able to enter in." "For if a man also strive after masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive *lawfully*."[4] And many lastly will seek, but too late, "when once the Master of the House is risen up,

[1] Eph. vi. 12.
[2] Eph. vi. 15.
[3] S. Luke xv. 8, seq.
[4] 2 Tim. ii. 5.

and hath shut to the door." Now, that kind and good Master is ever saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[1] Nay, He says of Himself, "Behold, *I* stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."[2] But then the door will be hopelessly closed. It will be in vain for man to "begin," (verse 25) when the opportunity has passed. In vain will Esau seek for the blessing, if he have not, while yet there was time, sought for "a place of repentance."[3] In vain will the Israelites, when the day of grace is over, "go with their flocks and herds to seek the LORD," for then "they shall not find Him: He hath withdrawn Himself from them."[4] In vain will the foolish virgins,[5] when the door is shut, stand without, saying, "LORD, LORD, open to us." Then the "seeking to enter in" will be useless: it will be too late.

Too late! Brethren, what a depth of misery is there in these two little words! Try to call to mind some great occasion when you have been, it may be, only just too late: think of the disappointment, the regret, and the heaviness of heart with which you turned back to go away,—how you said, "If we had but started a few minutes earlier!" and then think what it must be to come too late, not for any earthly thing, but too late to enter into the kingdom of heaven! Think of that new and heart-eating wretchedness you will feel when you behold, not the open "strait gate," (ah! you would give worlds to see that now!) but that "door" impenetrably and eternally closed and barred against you. Never, never

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7. [2] Rev. iii. 20. [3] Heb. xiii. 17.
[4] Hos. v. 6. [5] S. Matt. xxv. 11.

now shall you catch even a glimpse of that heavenly Jerusalem, that happy home of saints and angels; of some, perhaps, whom you yourselves loved and cherished on earth. Never shall you behold that jasper wall,—those gates, dazzling bright with precious pearls,—that "street of the city," paved with "pure gold, as it were transparent glass."[1] Never, never shall you hear those glorious canticles of everlasting praise, those thrilling harmonies of ransomed saints, echoing and re-echoing through the celestial courts. Never, never shall you enjoy that rest, that calm, that peace, that ravishing bliss, with those "righteous, who shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER."[2] Never, never will you be filled with those abundant consolations, those ineffable delights, that enchanting love. Never, never will you gaze on the unspeakable glory of the Eternal TRINITY, and the Glorified Humanity of the loving and adorable JESUS. No, no; you might have gazed on all this; you might have drunk of all these pleasures as out of the river; you might have had all tears wiped from your eyes, and dwelt for ever in that city where "there shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain,"—where there will be "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of GOD does lighten it, and the LAMB is the Light thereof."[3] You might have enjoyed all this; but now it is impossible—the Day of Grace is past. "The days of visitation are come; the days of recompense are come."[4] "The Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the door." It is *too late.*

W. R. W.

[1] Rev. xxi.
[2] S. Matt. xiii. 43.
[3] Rev. xxi. 4, 23.
[4] Hos. ix. 7.

SERMON XX.

MATERIAL WORSHIP A CONSEQUENCE OF INTERNAL DEVOTION.

PSALM XCV. 6.

"O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND FALL DOWN: AND KNEEL BEFORE THE LORD OUR MAKER."

PERHAPS of all the faults and shortcomings of Christians, nay, of people calling themselves Churchmen of the present age is that of *irreverence*; certainly it is the most conspicuous and widely spread. Were a foreigner to enter most of our churches during the time the Divine Office is being said; were he to do so while even the deepest mystery of our faith was being celebrated, what would be his impression? Would it be that he was in a place consecrated, set apart solely to the worship of an Almighty Being? that the congregation was assembled for the purpose of worshipping that Almighty Being? I fear not. He would imagine it some place of amusement, some lecture hall probably. Nor were his attention to be diverted from the congregation to those who were celebrating the Office, would he be more enlightened. He would naturally enough conclude, from the usual position of the Priest, that he was ad-

dressing not an invisible, supreme, holy Being, but the people before him; and that they seemed rather as though they were worshipping him, than GOD.

Now, my brethren, I ask whether people have, in this day, much idea of *worship?* What is the language many of them use, what expressions do they employ respecting the services of the Church? Do they not talk about going to hear such and such an one preach? Do they not criticise his sermon? Are they wrapt engrossed in prayer during the time Office is being recited? nay, rather, are they restless, impatient, fatigued until it is concluded? But immediately the preacher ascends the pulpit, all this distraction vanishes. They seem absorbed, attentive, engrossed: they are impatient of any interruption, of everything that may withdraw their observation from the preacher.

Now I am not condemning this concentrating of the faculties upon the sermon in itself. It is right and proper and fitting that people should listen to GOD'S message delivered by GOD'S ambassador. But I do insist that this is not *worship*. It is, on the contrary, indulging "itching ears;" it is a desire to hear "some new thing," some "new doctrine;" seldom, I fear, to receive instruction in the will of GOD, to submit humbly and with a teachable spirit to the admonitions, exhortations, reproofs at the Priest's mouth. It is, in fact, turning the house of prayer into a house of preaching. It is forgetfulness of CHRIST'S promise that where two or three are gathered together in His Name there is He in the midst of them.

Surely, my brethren, if it were not so, if congregations did realize His Presence in His Own consecrated house, we should not so often be offended and pained by

their conduct while therein. I am not now speaking of open undisguised mockery, insult, blasphemy, such as the Church and world have for some time, too long time witnessed, in a church in the Metropolis. Persons guilty of it are to be pitied, prayed for, for they "know not what they do;" but I am speaking now of a respectable, well-dressed, orderly congregation, such as is usually to be met with in nine out of ten churches, such as the world esteems estimable, religious educated people. Now, what, I ask, do you notice as the common type, the usual behaviour of such persons? Why, something like this: during the confession and prayers, when they should be humbled and lowly in their outward actions as they are supposed to be in their hearts, a sitting posture, mute lips, wandering eyes, or may be, they compromise matters, and though seeming to kneel, do, in fact, neither sit nor kneel, as if they thought either it was too much trouble or unnecessary to bend the knee in homage to Almighty GOD in token of humility and abasement in His Presence—the creature to the Creator —the sinner to his Judge—dust and ashes to the Omnipotent everlasting GOD.

But if this listless indifferent position and conduct be maintained during the ordinary Offices of the Church, of the public worship of GOD, we may anticipate that when the greatest mystery of our faith is being celebrated, when CHRIST Himself, undivided CHRIST is on the holy altar after the Priest has said the consecrating words; when He is as truly though invisibly present as when He walked this earth; when, moreover, the Blessed Sacrament of His Body is placed in the extended hand—the consecrated chalice to the lips—then, surely, we shall witness some token of reverence, some

posture of devotion, some homage to the GOD-Man. Surely, then, the sinner will prostrate himself in the very Presence of his Incarnate LORD; surely then, "worship and fall down and kneel before the LORD his Maker."

Alas! alas! he behaves as though he had no belief, no comprehension whatever of this ineffable Presence, as though the Blessed Sacrament were, what it appears to him, ordinary bread and wine, and nothing more. Where the bowed head, the bended knee, the prostrate body? Where the shrinking and awed approach, the cast-down eye, the low-breathed sigh, the hushed step?

No; he approaches as boldly and confidently—this worshipper I was about to call him—as he would enter a room; he has no sense, no idea in whose immediate Presence he is, or of Whom he is about to partake; he would not comprehend you if you tried to explain it to him, perhaps would ridicule the idea of any presence whatever, any superhuman change effected by the Priest's consecration. His very action and demeanour show his disbelief in any mystery in this most solemn and affecting function.

I am not asserting that this absence of reverence may not have been occasioned by want of any definite dogmatic teaching, though the Catechism will have taught him dogmatically enough if he ever learned or remembered it, or that he may have imbibed principles which have led him to deny that CHRIST is not sacramentally present in His Own ordinances. I am not now insisting upon the causes of his want of faith and of reverence, but only the effects and consequences of them. But one obvious cause I cannot pass by. How can a Priest who, in his own person and conduct shows

how little *he* realises the solemn, and awful, and stupendous act he is engaged in,—I ask, how can he expect any other conduct in his people than irreverence? Or how should a congregation imbibe any idea "of worship" when they neither witness any demonstration of it in their Priest, nor have been taught it from his lips? Is it to be expected that they should exhibit any homage when, e.g., the Sacred Name is pronounced, when mention of the Blessed TRINITY is made, when the doctrine of the Incarnation is recited in the Creed, when their teacher makes none? Of course it is not. But what is even more sad is, that very often they are taught that such reverence and homage are unnecessary, that they have a tendency to idolatry, and are told that they are not required by GOD, even if they are not distasteful and displeasing to Him; that He "is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth," and that therefore He requires no outward demonstration of worship, no bended knee, no bowed head, that it must be *inward*, and so long as it is inward, in the heart, as it is called, it is sufficient. Believe me, brethren, that though a man may assume outward actions of devotion without possessing it in his heart, it is on the other hand *impossible* that, if he has the feelings and reality of reverence and devotion in his heart, but they will, they must develope themselves in his outward and visible actions more or less. And the more deep and sincere are his inward convictions, so the more unreservedly will he prove by his acts the sincerity of his belief. Therefore it often happens that people who really have not deep and strong faith, for instance in the doctrine of the Real Presence, deride those who professing it, show their faith by what others call extravagant and exaggerated gestures. As if one man could by any

possibility judge of another's feelings, and of another's faith! One man may be constituted cold, and phlegmatic, and practical: another enthusiastic, fervent, and impulsive. But each will act differently, according to his temperament. In either case, supposing both to have faith, it will only be in degree that they evince it by their outward reverence; whereas, the man who has no faith whatever, so far from giving credit to those who do possess any, will ridicule the outward demonstration of it, and call, or at least consider those hypocrites who testify their faith by acts of devotion.

And this reverence of theirs will not be confined solely to the public worship of GOD; it will display itself in all their devotional offices, in their family and private prayers, in the respect they pay to GOD's priests, in their regard to everything connected with GOD's service. They would hesitate to *rush* into the sanctuary of His Church, to handle profanely holy vessels dedicated to His service, to use without care and reverence His Holy Book. They will bear in mind the punishment of Uzzah, and learn from it how jealous GOD is of profane hands touching, even to protect, His Ark.

My brethren, surely the Church militant on earth is but a preparation and education for the Church triumphant in heaven; and who that reads the glorious account of the ritualism of the heavenly Church in the Revelation of S. John can doubt that similar, though it is a far inferior worship, is pleasing and acceptable to GOD if offered to His honour and glory below? And how can we better fit and prepare ourselves for an everlasting abode in the Presence of GOD than by celebrating His worship reverently and devoutly in His Church on earth? As a wicked man could have no delight among the glories of heaven, so we may suppose that he who

refuses to honour GOD with his body now, with "reverence and godly fear," will be out of place among those who "*fall down*" and "*worship* Him that liveth for ever and ever," and Who is "worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power, among those holy Angels who surround His throne, those "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" who with "a loud voice" say, "Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

O, my brethren, let us realize to ourselves that we must adore the holy GOD in company with these blessed ones should we be admitted to these heavenly mansions; that however reluctant we may have been to pay Him personal homage *now, then* it will be our delight, our employment to fall down on our "knees before His footstool," and sing to Him heavenly and everlasting praises. Let us bear in mind that He is our Creator, our loving FATHER, our Almighty SAVIOUR, and we creatures of His Hand, undutiful children, wandering sheep, and yet that for such He sent His Incarnate SON to die, to teach us by His Own example how to worship, how to attain heaven, where He has prepared for us such "good things" as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive:" that there we shall see Him in His tremendous majesty and power, no longer now as through a glass darkly, but face to face, and "know even as we are known:" there shall we be "evermore praising Him and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: glory be to Thee, O LORD most High."

T. D. D.

SERMON XXI.

THE VAIN OBLATION.

MALACHI I. 13.

"YE BROUGHT THAT WHICH WAS TORN, AND THE LAME, AND THE SICK; THUS YE BROUGHT AN OFFERING: SHOULD I ACCEPT THIS OF YOUR HAND? SAITH THE LORD."

THESE words, which contain a forcible condemnation of the careless practices of the later Jewish Church, coming, as they do, so immediately after that remarkable and oft-quoted prophecy in reference to the character and perpetuity of the Christian Sacrifice, demand our best consideration.

We know too well that soon after the time of Solomon a great and grievous schism took place in Israel. The kingdom was divided. And the temple worship—comprising mainly perpetual and continuous acts of sacrifice—was grievously curtailed of its original character and dignity. The admirable policy and practice of David and Solomon had been too soon forgotten, and many were the changes which division or indifference so unhappily effected. Now the courts of the LORD'S house were no longer thronged: nor were the minute but typical directions of the Jewish ceremonial

carefully observed. Apathy and negligence did their work. The captivity in Babylon, and the evil influences of surrounding nations, tended greatly to this end. The better traditions of a more religious era had gradually died out, and a mere cold formality took their place. Priests as well as people swam with the tide, and attempted no restoration. So no wonder that Malachi, the last of the prophets, stood forth in the Name of Almighty GOD to denounce their sins, and declare that another and a better sacrifice should be offered, when the Gentiles should be admitted into His favour, and His Name be great among the heathen.

For too long a time Almighty GOD had been forgotten. For too long a time His laws had been disregarded, and His Priests forgetful of their vows. So the people were led astray and scattered, and seldom trod the almost deserted courts of the LORD'S House. Their offerings were given grudgingly, their teachers were removed into a corner, their promises were unfulfilled. The meanest was given to GOD, and while the cry to the seers of the Most High was, "Prophesy unto us smooth things, speak unto us deceits," the appointed worship of the ALMIGHTY—that very worship which He had specially commanded—was miserably neglected. The lamb without spot or blemish was almost unknown. The oblation of fine flour was seldom provided, and frankincense was lacking for a sweet odour before the LORD. "Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD." Thus, then, was the GOD of Israel grievously dishonoured.

Now, before we proceed to consider in what way dishonour is deliberately offered to Almighty GOD in

certain parts of the Church in this present day, under the Christian dispensation, we should bear in mind that from the very beginning of the world the offering of sacrifices was the chief and universal mode of worship. This was the case both in the law of nature and in the law of Moses. In the one case, tradition had preserved a record of Abel's accepted offering—manifest in the act of Melchisedek—in the other GOD had given a distinct revelation of His Will to the leaders of His chosen people. All these appointed sacrifices were of themselves only weak and beggarly elements, mere types and figures of that one perfect and efficacious sacrifice which in His accomplished time, the promised Shiloh,—the Redeemer of the world—should offer on Calvary. Nor were they accepted of GOD on account of any intrinsic worth in the things offered: for the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sins; but only in consideration of the sacrifice of JESUS CHRIST which was to come, of which they were all types, and towards which they all most distinctly pointed.

Accordingly our Blessed SAVIOUR, having taken our nature upon Him in Mary's womb, was pleased to offer Himself a Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world upon the altar of the Cross: by which offering we were completely redeemed, inasmuch as our ransom was paid, and all mercy, grace, and salvation purchased for us. Nor, as we are well assured, can there be any need of His dying again: "CHRIST being dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him;" or of purchasing any other graces than those obtained by that His precious bloodshedding.

But in order that this mercy, grace, and salvation may be perpetually applied, and actually communicated

to the faithful, our Blessed LORD not only continually represents and pleads that Sacrifice before His Eternal FATHER in Heaven, being "the Lamb of GOD that taketh away the sins of the world," but has, in His Church on earth, "instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death," in which He has bequeathed His Blessed Body and Blood, not only to be our spiritual Food and Sustenance, but also to be offered and presented by His Ministers to His FATHER as a sacrifice—"although we be unworthy through our manifold sins to offer unto Thee *any* sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept This" —not by way of a new death, but as a standing memorial of His death, a continual celebration and representation of His death to GOD and an application to our souls of the fruits of it.

Now this is the sacrifice—the pure oblation—prophesied of by Malachi in the chapter from which the text is taken. And so intimately allied with the sacrifice of the Cross is the sacrifice of the Altar of the Christian dispensation, that it completely answers all the various ends of sacrifice, and this in a manner infinitely more perfect than any of the ancient sacrifices. Here CHRIST is both Priest and Victim—Priest in that His Death and Passion are pleaded before the FATHER: Victim, in that He is the Lamb of GOD. This sacrifice, therefore, as we learn in the Catechism, was ordained, first, "for the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the death of CHRIST;" secondly, as a most solemn worship of the Divine Majesty: thirdly, as a most acceptable thanksgiving to GOD, from whence it is called the *Eucharist*; fourthly, as a powerful means to move Almighty GOD to show us mercy:—"Look upon the Face of Thine

Anointed," "Forgive us our trespasses;" and, fifthly, as the most efficacious way of obtaining all that we require at GOD's Hands, coming to Him, as we do, with CHRIST, and through CHRIST our only LORD and SAVIOUR.

Hence, therefore, we see how the Service for Holy Communion ought to be rightly regarded as the chief act of Christian worship, and why our altars should be the principal objects in a church. Hence we perceive the beauty and perfection of the truth as it is in JESUS. For from the very earliest ages of Christianity the saints of GOD have lingered round this abiding reality, "continuing stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." From those periods have come down to us the various Apostolic and early Liturgies, rich in their expressions and clear in their doctrinal statements; each teaching one central truth, all declaring one unchanging verity. So that no other service was known or existed but the one Eucharistic office—slightly varying in form—the solemn Liturgy of the One Catholic Church.

And this was her practice for centuries. Day by day in the early morning, or before the noon passed away, the altar was spread, and the oblation offered; while each returning Sunday and solemn feast found the faithful bending down in adoration to worship Him Who had promised to be with the Church until the end of the world, and Whose promise had never failed. No other Divine Service was known. Centuries before the various Hours came into use, or before the Psalter was regarded as a public devotion for the laity, the Eucharist and the Eucharist alone was the worship of the Church; and it was not until faith grew cold, and bitter controversies arose, and charity was not, that any change took

place. It was not until the proud and presumptuous had gained power, and the semi-sceptic stood by to criticise the mysteries of religion by the flickering gleam of reason's light, that the altars of the Most High were unused and neglected. Just as, under the old dispensation, evils were rapidly increased and strangely multiplied when the kingdom of Israel was divided; so was it in the Church Universal. When schisms were effected, then came unbelief, with a dark train of evils, to afflict the faithful few, and to despise and weaken that Divine authority of the Spouse of CHRIST, of which the world seemed to have grown weary.

Then was the Eucharist deliberately thrust into the background; then were apostolic traditions overthrown, and the straight and ancient paths forsaken. Thus, therefore,—when it is borne in mind what is too frequently the actual practice of the present Church of England,—do we arrive at the point brought forward for our consideration at the outset.

Notwithstanding the revival of true religion which it has pleased Almighty GOD to permit this present age to witness, but little has comparatively been effected in restoring the Eucharistic practices of the ancient Church. In too many cases the true theory of Christian worship has been practically altogether forgotten. The "pure offering," the Christian sacrifice, foretold by the prophet Malachi, is too seldom made. Only let the present practice of the English Church be compared with that which existed in the East in S. Cyril's time, or in the West when S. Austin came to bring the Gospel message to Britain, and we cannot fail to admit the existence of great laxness and irregularity.

In too many churches, Sunday after Sunday, in lieu

of that Oblation which GOD desires to receive, and which our Blessed SAVIOUR Himself especially directed His Apostles and their successors, the Christian Bishops and Priests of all ages, to make, is only offered a mutilated and unmeaning act of worship,—entirely novel, and utterly pointless,—consisting of that part of the present Eucharistic Office which takes in the Nicene Creed, or the prayer for the Church Militant. The officiating Priest—while, perhaps, the choir is singing an introit—goes deliberately and solemnly to the altar, which he knows to be wholly unprepared for the celebration of the Sacrament, there being no sacred vessels or oblations, and there reads a mere fragment of the Liturgy, known popularly, but incorrectly, as the "Communion Service." Now it may be safely asserted that on three Sundays out of four, in the large majority of our churches, this gross and "corrupt following of the Apostles" is still continually perpetrated.

Surely, if, as we look back upon the history of the children of Israel, and especially upon the gradual decline and decay of their national church, we cannot fail to perceive that, by neglecting the express commands of Almighty GOD, as regards the character and frequency of their Sacrifices, they deserved that punishment which it pleased Him to inflict upon them; it behoves us to consider how much more grievous and dark is this our sin of omission under the better dispensation of CHRIST. For our ceremonial acts are not mere Jewish ordinances, but duly appointed safeguards of deep sacramental realities; nor is our Sacrifice a mere type of something better, but the "pure oblation"—the high Sacrifice of the Christian Church itself—pointed out by Malachi.

Who will venture to assert, then, that Almighty GOD is

not now actually punishing us as a national Church, for having for so long a period deliberately disobeyed His plain and explicit injunctions? Why has faith grown cold, and charity been forgotten? Why have the fabrics of our churches been too often neglected, and their altars allowed to remain foul, mean, and uncared for? Why have the distinctive and most exalted doctrines of the Gospel become distasteful to so many, and a mere respectable morality all that can be tolerated? Why have grand almsdeeds—in comparison with those of the ages of faith—become so few and far between, and niggardliness and loud cries for simplicity become so earnest and common? Because the Holy Eucharist has been altogether put into the background,—the whole theory of Christian worship has been banished,—and thus virtually forgotten by the great majority of the people. If —as so many readily admit—the neglect of public baptism begat a positive disbelief in the Catholic doctrine of regeneration at the font, surely the perpetration of that vain oblation already described, has, no doubt, been the means of propagating the very lowest and laxest doctrine in regard to the Holy Eucharist. For no amount of true and earnest sermons, even supposing they have been preached, can possibly be expected to stem the tide of false doctrine; while the actual practice of the Church of the present day is so very much below that either of the Apostolic age, or the period of the Catholic Fathers. People are far more easily won by actual deeds than by empty words; and so it has been that, as long as Morning Prayer, Litany, "Communion Service," as it is called, and Sermon, have made up the ordinary morning act of worship in the English Church, so long have Calvinistic and Zuinglian concep-

tions of the Eucharist obtained amongst us. Too long have we had, Sunday after Sunday, this empty and meaningless rite,—this novel invention of a faithless age, this mere quaint mutilation; so that—with all our higher privileges and deeper responsibilities, possessing as we do, the faith once for all delivered to the saints,—these words of Malachi, originally proclaimed to the Jews, are surely not inapplicable to ourselves: "Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD."

Now, that the Eucharist itself, in its entirety, was the only public worship of the Early Church is patent as well from Holy Scripture as from the existing writings of the Catholic Fathers. S. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Philadelphians affirms as much. So, too, S. Justin Martyr in his "Dialogue with Trypho." Tertullian likewise—plainly connecting the prophecy of Malachi with its literal and actual fulfilment in his own days—bears equally strong testimony to this fact. The great S. Cyprian likewise, in his sixty-third Epistle, writes thus:—"And because we make mention of CHRIST'S sufferings in all sacrifices, for the LORD'S Passion is the sacrifice we offer, we ought to do nothing else but what He did." So too, S. Gregory the Great, who sent the glad tidings of salvation by S. Augustine to England. "This sacrifice," he declares, "saves the soul from eternal perishing: which by a mystery repairs for us the death of the Only Begotten, Who, although risen from the dead dieth no more, for death hath no more dominion over Him, still in Himself living immortally and incorruptibly, is again immolated for us in this mystery of the sacred oblation. Inasmuch as there His Body is

taken, His Flesh is distributed for the salvation of the people. His Blood is poured, not now in the hand of unbelievers, but into the mouths of the faithful. Hence then we judge of what sort is this sacrifice on our behalf, which for our absolution ever imitates the Passion of the Only Begotten SON. For which of the faithful can hold it doubtful, that at the very hour of the sacrifice at the Priest's voice the heavens are opened, that in that mystery of JESUS CHRIST, the choirs of angels are present, lowest things are associated with the highest, earthly things joined with those of heaven, a oneness also made of things visible and invisible." Other writers might be referred to, in support of this proposition, were it necessary to do so; but considering the character of the ancient liturgies, their mystical and solemn language, their remarkable harmony, and the universality of their use, it must be abundantly evident that this oblation and this Eucharistic sacrifice alone, was the only chief act of public worship in vogue during the patristic age of the Church.

The customs and practices of the middle ages likewise, were identical with those of the preceding. Wherever the standard of the Cross had been raised, wherever the foot of the confessor had trod, or the martyr had bled, there was known the one true act of worship of the Catholic Church to console them in their trials, and to be a literal fulfilment of the promise of their Master, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The altar was raised, the Priest stood near in his sacrificial habit, and the solemn Eucharist was offered to the Eternal FATHER. At Rome, at Milan, in the far East (amongst the Greeks and the Copts, the Armenians, and the Christians of Malabar,) in Spain, Britain, and

Germany, did the rite vary in detail; but the substance was identical in all, and the oblation in each was the same and efficacious. Everywhere the prayer in substance rose up:—"Look upon the face of Thine Anointed," and "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners." Thus was the oblation offered. Thus was the sacrifice accepted of the LORD, Who had expressly commanded it to be made.

But as it had been under the Mosaic dispensation so was it with the Universal Church of GOD. Divisions did their miserable work. So long as the robe of CHRIST was unrent and the Eucharistic chant ascended to the footstool of the Most High in one sweet harmony, —so long as divisions were unknown, was the Christian sacrifice in its perfection offered and accepted by GOD. But schism brought a very locust flight of human opinions to eat off the leaves of the tree of faith, and to mar its original beauty. So that after the schism of the eleventh century, when the floating and shifting opinions of one portion of the Church were unbalanced by those of another; when on the one hand there was a craving for some new thing, and on the other a close clinging to the ancient and certain deposit of truth, local evils sprang up and increased. These together with grave practical abuses so tended to prepare men's minds for a desire for still further change, that five centuries later the true balance was unpreserved and changes were thus effected.

So that as a matter of fact—with few and bright exceptions, the English communion has been too forgetful of the express injunctions of her Divine LORD, and has too readily succumbed to an apathetic spirit on the part of certain of her children. The empty rite which is

still too commonly practised was then set up in lieu of the great Christian sacrifice, so that when the children in their weakness and want asked for the Bread of heaven, they obtained only a stone.

Surely, surely, beloved, this cannot be pleasing to Almighty GOD. Sunday and festival passing away with no proper oblation. The altar unlit, the liturgy unsaid, the people verily fainting by the way. As a rule the only public service a service which might be read at home—the only miserable effects a subjective feeling, and a degradation of the Catholic religion to a level of those invented by men.

And what is the voice of GOD? A voice of warning, a solemn exhortation, an authoritative injunction. "Ye brought that which was torn and the lame and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD."

Here in truth there is need for change. Here we require another reformation. On this point we should seek out the straight and ancient paths. O GOD, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us the noble works that Thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them. Open Thou our eyes therefore, that we may see Thy truth, and follow Thy plain commands. The old sacrifices of the law are passed for ever away. But the sacrifice of the new covenant is until the coming again of the Son of Man. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He is the Lamb of GOD Who taketh away the sins of the world. He is our great High Priest Who is passed into the heavens. He it is Who said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." So that we may show forth the LORD'S death until He come. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto

the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For our place of prayer and earnest supplication is none other than the foot of GOD'S altar. There we may find Him Who is the Friend of sinners, our elder Brother, our SAVIOUR, and our GOD. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." GOD will there hear and answer your prayers, and pour down the riches of His grace upon you. There stands the Priest, CHRIST'S minister, acting in His Person—the offering, the sacrifice of the Eucharist. This is the true oblation. This the reality. So "bring no more vain oblations." Bring no more the torn, and the lame and the sick—the mutilated fragment; but the True and efficacious Offering of the new Law, and in union with that adorable sacrifice of CHRIST JESUS, offer yourselves, your souls, and your bodies to GOD, and ye shall be accepted by Him for the sake of His only begotten SON, the SAVIOUR of the world,—at once the Priest and the Victim; which may He of His mercy grant to all of us! Amen.

F. G. L.

SERMON XXII.

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.[1]

REV. XIV. 13.

"AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD FROM HENCEFORTH: YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS: AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."

THE course of time has now brought before us the last scene which closes this season of mourning and expectancy. After the awful event of Golgotha, all hope seems to have abandoned the disciples of the LORD, and they give but one sign of the love they had borne towards Him. They could no longer hang in rapt attention on His words, no more be His instruments for diffusing blessings around Him, not again be honoured by abiding in His Presence or receiving Him as a guest.

They could at least rescue from further ignominy that Form which they had loved, the sacred Body from the touch of which health of soul and body resulted to them who believed. And so, tenderly and reverently they fold those scarred and tortured limbs in fine linen, soft

[1] For Easter Eve.

and pure, with rich gifts of eastern spices, and lay them with aching hearts in the rocky sepulchre.

Faith there was in their deed, and love, surviving the scorn and mockery of the world, in that they thus dared to testify their veneration for their murdered LORD, even after the verdict of the great ones of the earth had branded Him as a malefactor, after they had triumphantly shown that He was not the King of Israel, because He did not save Himself from the Cross. But that fact had had its influence upon the people, even upon the disciples themselves; for no mourning crowds poured in long procession to the rites of the most solemn burial in the world's history, not even the chosen and peculiar band of friends watched the obsequies of Him Who had loved them with so deep a love. Save Nicodemus and that rich counsellor who showed his devotion to the Mighty Dead by his care for His holy Body, none were there but two out of those four who had stood beside the Cross, the peasant woman and the outcast of the city, Mary the mother of Joses and Mary Magdalene.

And the other two, where were they? Where was the Beloved Disciple, and where she who is full of grace, the blessed among women? Alas! the hour had now come of which the aged saint had told the young Mother when with anxious and yet rejoicing heart she had brought her Infant LORD to His Own Altar. The sword had pierced her virgin breast, and over her sorrows and those of him to whose care she had been entrusted, a veil has been cast that hides them from our gaze. The two were there in the fisherman's poor home, oppressed by a grief too deep and sad, too holy and mysterious, for us to pry into with curious search. The delight of their eyes was gone from them, and they sorrowed as

having no hope, for as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that He should rise again from the dead. But in that strange interval wondrous things were being enacted, of which they did not dream. He Who had gone down into the grave was become its destruction. Death was swallowed up in victory. The secrets of that prison-house to which all had been till now looking with terror, were explored, and stripped of the unimaginable horror which had enveloped them.

Dim hopes had passed in trances and visions before the spirits of holy men ere then, that the pains, and toils, and sorrows of this earthly life did not end in mere extinction of all sense, that there might be a higher calm, a more perfect happiness than all they had tasted here. "The souls of the righteous," saith a wise man of old, "are in the Hands of GOD, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure was taken for misery, and their going from us to be their destruction, but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of man, yet is their hope full of immortality." But such a faith as this, such a glimpse into the unseen was vouchsafed to few even of the favoured people of Israel, while the Gentile world was without hope, without sure presage of happiness to come, and looking with unimaginable shrinking and agony of soul towards that dread moment when the spirit would go forth on its wanderings whither they knew not, scarcely dared inquire. Not that they too had not some vague hope that their own selves, that part of them of which they could say, "This is I," would live on after the body had returned to the dust whence it came: but it was little more than escape from utter destruction that they anticipated; their heaven or

paradise was but a dull and joyless shadow of what had been loved on earth, a pale and cold and sickly moonlight, for which they were forced to barter the bright and genial radiance of the sun. And even this, eagerly as it was caught at, was wrapped in uncertainty and doubt. They saw the flowers die, and return again, the seed planted in the earth spring up, but the strong and beautiful and loved who had gone from them they saw no more, and knew not if they were ever to meet again. Death was for them almighty; from his hand there was no escape, and no hope that it could ever be otherwise. They saw not the bright light that was in the cloud, but the wind was coming which would cleanse them, when anxiety would change into hope, and doubt into certainty and confidence, and that too of better things than Job dreamed of when he thought that freedom from the wicked and cessation of toil were all the blessings that the unknown land had to offer. He thought only of death, of a "land of darkness, and darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness."

But order had now entered that chaos, on them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death had the light shined. And from this moment we hear no more of the children of GOD dying, but they are said to sleep, to take their rest in joyful hope of a yet more blessed waking. And not only is this said of those who followed in the steps of the LORD JESUS, to whom the great mystery of the Resurrection had been revealed, but also of those who had been gathered to their fathers while anxiously looking for the kingdom of GOD. Till now they had been spoken of as dead, for though they had obtained a good report through faith, yet they re-

ceived not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Now the time was come to clear up the mist that hung over their fate, and the tidings were borne to us that it was well with them, that they rested from their labours, and their works had followed them. And so the tone of God's saints changes to a different prayer from that of their fathers. They do not ask with David that their eyes may be lightened that they sleep not in death, nor do they beg a respite as did the brave and trustful Hezekiah. Not so: they speak in calm and unterrified words of their approaching dissolution, even in words of longing for its approach, not like self-murderers, as being anxious to flee from the burden of an evil and despairing conscience; for to them to live was Christ, and in purity and holiness of life a deep joy was theirs, which made them fully conscious of the happiness of existence, of the beauties of God's lovely world. But they knew that it is but the outer court of His temple, and they, as His royal priesthood, felt that their fitting post was in the holy place within the veil, and pressing on thither they could look on death without the shuddering dismay of men who had only fears for what is to come. They could wait His time in patience, but they longed to flee away to Him, and be at rest.

They sleep, in that the Great Waking of full and perfect life has not yet come for them more than it has for us, but not as though they were lying in unconscious trance until the final day. Were they so, this would be death, temporary and short in duration, it is true, but still death; and we are told that it has no more dominion over them. But we are told that they sleep, that

we may thus have a full idea of their utter calm. For as we in the hours of slumber are free from the troubles of mind and pangs of body which often harass us whilst we wake, so they too rest from their labours,—or, as we might rather say, their pains. All the cares and anxieties of earth are lulled for ever, all their fears and doubts are over; all the sorrow from being misunderstood, from being maligned and persecuted, all the grief of unrequited love, of frustrated good, has passed away, and the tears are wiped from their eyes. Torture and shame are at an end; the martyrs and confessors can now worship in peace, blessed by the nearer Presence of Him to Whom they had borne faithful testimony upon earth. The very physical infirmities which formed part of their cross while they walked with us are healed; and the dumb can now chant the praises of their LORD, and the blind look undazzled upon His glory,—the glory as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth.

One thing more we know: "their works follow them." Their *labours* have ceased; they no longer toil along under the burden of that cross which was given them to bear; weariness and faintness are no more; but their *works* follow them. That which is called sleep in them is a higher state than our waking, for they are free from all those hindrances and disturbances which interfere with our performance of our tasks. They are more nearly conformed to the Image of GOD, Who worketh hitherto; and being more like unto Him, they must do His works better than we can here in earth. Heaven is no place of idleness. The LORD'S Prayer tells us that GOD'S will is *done* there; we are told to do it likewise here,—proof enough that more is done there than

worshipping and praising Him. And as the whole creation is employed in working out His ends, the souls of the faithful in Paradise are, as we believe, engaged also in hastening the coming of His kingdom. This is one great encouragement to us in the disappointments and weaknesses which beset us, when we are toiling for some great and good end, and think, as we are sometimes apt to do, with Elijah of old, that we alone are left on GOD'S side,—that all others are gone over to Baal. He was rebuked with the news that there were seven thousand as true-hearted as he, and that he did not represent all the faith and loyalty of his nation. A wider revelation is made to us when we learn that on our side are ranged the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all stronger, purer, wiser, than when they laboured amongst us here on earth. We cannot see them, it is true; but faith is the evidence of things not seen; it is part of the very nature of our trial that we should not see them; though, if it were to please GOD to withdraw for a moment the mist before our eyes, as He did from those of Elisha's servant in Dothan, we should see, like him, not only chariots of fire and horses of fire surrounding us, but also sights less terrible and far dearer to us. Then should we behold the forms of those whom we loved whilst we had them with us, who went from us with calm trust in their Redeemer, wringing our hearts as they departed with a sorrow far less for them than for ourselves. And we should see them who had been as angels upon the earth, whose gentleness and purity, whose earnestness and devotion, had shed a halo round them,—whose steps were blessed by the widow and the orphan,—still working in

the same vocation with clearer vision and far wider powers.

This is the faith which we declare that we hold when we profess our belief in the Communion of Saints; for then we assert that we are not divided from those who have gone before, but that they are hidden from our sight,—that there is still a real and practical union between us and them; not merely that such a union will one day take place, but that it is in actual existence now, and working for our good. And they, too, though they have passed farther into the shrine than we, are, notwithstanding, like the fathers before the coming of the LORD, not yet made perfect. They wait for us to come, and their joy cannot be complete till the number of their Master's jewels is made up.

As, then, you would toil for those of your beloved on earth who needed any blessing you could procure them by your exertions, so strive by prayer, and self-denial, and holiness of life, to hasten the coming of His kingdom, which will bring with it perfect bliss to the tender parents, the darling children, the wives and husbands, brethren and friends who have gone from you in faith; and that you may not mingle with their rejoicings the pang of seeing any of you turning away from those blessings which they enjoy and voluntarily abandoning all hope of meeting them again. Press on rather that you may join the multitude of the faithful departed who have passed into the House of GOD in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, and there keep holy day with those whom you loved and reverenced upon earth, not for a brief season of refreshment, but to part no more for ever and ever.

R. F. L.

SERMON XXIII.

CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

S. JOHN XI. 25, 26.

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME THOUGH HE WERE DEAD YET SHALL HE LIVE: AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE."

LAZARUS, the brother of Mary and Martha, was dead. The sisters of Bethany had watched beside him for days, in sorrow and in hope, but now he is gone. The blood flows no more, the heart beats not, the hands are motionless. Now all is over. JESUS had been sent for —"LORD, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick"—but had not come. Hope had died out, for no miracle had been wrought, and death had effected one more bitter separation and claimed one fresh victory.

The prophetic sentence of old was, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," and thousands upon thousands had witnessed its fulfilment. So that death was known to be a law of nature, for all the paths of earth most surely led to the grave. This was not of faith but of sight. Neither power nor wealth nor intellect nor moral excellence was an elixir of life: nor

did those who owned them escape this universal portion of the temporal punishment of sin.

And so was it, as we have just seen, in the case before us. "Then said JESUS unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." The miracle of the raising of Lazarus was worked, therefore, for the confirmation of the faith of Mary and Martha and those who were privileged to witness it: as well as for the edification of Christians in every age of the Church.

But it is especially to the words which our Blessed SAVIOUR spoke to Mary immediately before the miracle was wrought, and the lessons which they teach, that our special attention is now directed: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And these words seem naturally to divide themselves into three portions: first, the statement of fact, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" secondly, the promise, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and, thirdly, the ratification and extension of that promise, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

1. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Yes: our Blessed SAVIOUR is the Life, in that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He called the world into existence by a motion of His will or by a word. He said, "Let there be light and there was light." Sun and moon, stars and sea; beasts and cattle; fish and feathered fowls came into being at His command. He

gathered the waters together and bade the mountains stand fast. He spake the word and they were made, He commanded and they were created. Everywhere life was. And then man—the crown of creation, the fairest handiwork of GOD—man, in the image of his Maker, was formed out of the dust of the earth. All things were made by the Second Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity, the Only-Begotten SON of GOD, and without Him was not anything made that was made. "In Him was Life." He drew us out of the deep abyss of nothing. He created us. It was He Who gave us the power of thinking, this conscious existence, this will, this memory, this understanding. Body and soul, with their respective properties and powers, were alone created by Him. This free will of ours which nothing controls, and which should be satisfied with nothing less than the Eternal; our understanding, which is capable of soaring above all created things visible and invisible, and of attaining even to the contemplation of GOD Himself, was likewise given by Him. So that most truly He is the Life. In Him we live and move and have our being. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

But He is also the Life in that He recreated man after the fall. Adam and Eve transgressed with deliberation the commandment of their Maker, lost Paradise, and brought sin into the world. Transgressions against faith and love, sins of the intellect, concupiscence in body and soul, and the actual partaking of the forbidden fruit—taken together—did their work, and brought down the blighting and abiding curse of an offended

GOD. Thorns and thistles sprang up. There were noxious poisons too, and noisome beasts; for the whole face of a beautiful creation was changed. A dark shadow had passed over it and obscured the light of its Creator. And more too: "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." And this was so until He came Who had been promised of old. The Second Adam undid the work of the First. Years were to pass until the pledge should be redeemed. Thousands were to watch and wait. The traditions of former days had not been forgotten, and were kept alive as food for the yearning souls of men. Kings and princes desired to see the day of the LORD, but slept with their fathers ere that day dawned. Death did his work ever, for the curse was still heavy, and the penalty had to be paid: and so the grave was always yawning, and the recollection of the end rose up spectre-like to mar the brightest pleasures and undermine the bravest hopes. In fine, every path ended in the grave.

But when by His Own inherent power—for He was True GOD as well as True Man—He rose from the grave, and the seal of the new tomb hewn out of a rock, was broken once and for ever; then was the crowning act of our Blessed SAVIOUR'S earthly mission completed, and life and immortality were brought to light. When He rose triumphant from the grave, the glorious work effected on Calvary by His death was made to appear still more glorious and complete by His rising again. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. As His death was the seal of the remission of our sins, so was His Resurrection the conclusive proof of His Power to ensure to us the glorious

consequences of that remission, even life instead of death, a new birth at the font, a new life, and justification; as well as the final salvation of soul and body in a blissful eternity. So that He is most truly the Resurrection and the Life.

But this was more especially made manifest before He died and rose again, by the miracle and work amongst others of raising Lazarus from the dead. Let us try to realise the scene. There stood Mary and Martha the bereaved, full of faith and hope and wonder. To the latter these very words had just been uttered by the Truth Himself. Their friends had come with words of consolation, and followed in anxious expectation when Mary invited her LORD to come and see where the dead was laid. The Apostles were near their Master in faith and wonder likewise; for they had seen the paralytic healed, and the waves of Gennesaret levelled. Maybe the day was growing old, and the fig-trees' shadows lengthening over Lazarus's grave. He wept Who was truly GOD, and Whose Sacred Heart beat for love of man. The stone was removed from the cavern dark and gloomy; and He Who is the Resurrection and the Life prayed thus: "FATHER, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me: and I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

There lay the corpse cold and motionless. "LORD, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." But He, at Whose behest that soul had been called into existence, could summon it back again from the place of departed spirits.

"Lazarus, come forth." That the command of its Maker, and this the creature's enacted response: "He

that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. JESUS saith unto them, 'Loose him and let him go.'" So their brother was restored by the Friend of Lazarus to the sisters of Bethany. And thus both in word and deed was JESUS the Resurrection and the Life.

And even so has it been from the day of Pentecost to the present hour. Apostles, saints, and preachers have declared the heavenly message, "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive." Dorcas and Eutychus were living witnesses of this. Though the Apostles were His instruments, CHRIST was the Life. The earth's dark places, where the influence of spiritual death was ever powerful, became illumined by the Gospel's light. CHRIST was *lumen ad revelationem gentium*. Nations that sat in darkness received the glad tidings of salvation, and knelt to adore Him Who is GOD of GOD and Light of Light.

Men died to sin and rose to righteousness each day that the world grew older. Baptism and penance—His own appointed ordinances—restored the spiritual life; and other graces were showered down as abundantly as the dews of heaven. If the light flickered and went out it was kindled again from the altar of His love. If man after Baptism found himself again dead in trespasses and sins, there was grace to be had by which he might arise in newness of life. True, man was the instrument; man poured the water and spake the absolving words: but CHRIST—our SAVIOUR and our GOD—wrought the work by the operation of the HOLY GHOST. Not for any particular age or country—for the Church is Catholic both as to time and place—but everywhere

and at all times, by His power and through His grace, were fresh resurrections effected, and a new life imparted in answer to an earnest prayer. And this shall be so for ever. "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Therefore to each and all of us, as truly as He was to Lazarus, is CHRIST the Resurrection and the Life.

2. And that this will ever be the case, His rich and abiding promise abundantly assures us. "He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live." Now to believe in CHRIST is no easy matter. To believe as the world believes, and as the devils believe, is not difficult. But to believe and act,—this is the real trial. To believe as Mary believed, when she exclaimed, "Yea, LORD, I believe that Thou art the CHRIST the SON of GOD," is indeed a state of mind to be envied. This is living faith, "He that believeth in Me," i.e., he that holdeth firmly by the truths which CHRIST has revealed and entrusted to His Church; he that walketh by faith and not by sight; he that is patient, obedient, hopeful, loving, earnest; he that ever remembers what S. James the Apostle wrote for our edification, "know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead," and labours so indeed ever and continually to imitate our Blessed SAVIOUR, and to follow humbly and at a distance in His footsteps, shall live—shall live now, in Him and through Him; and shall live hereafter for ever with Him in the glory and splendour of His FATHER'S mansions.

Again; "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Though he were dead. All men are dead in trespasses and sins. The influence of death is truly most mighty and world-wide. But it is

not this death to which allusion is here made. It is the death of the soul. No motion for good: no turning towards GOD and heaven apparent: no desire for repentance and forgiveness: no hope for peace and heaven. Yet still if there arise a desire for reconciliation with GOD; if there be manifest a hatred for sin and its miseries; if we can say, "I will arise and go to my FATHER, and will say unto Him, FATHER, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee," Almighty GOD, the Everlasting FATHER, will hasten to receive us and to bestow such graces upon us as that we may eventually become truly repentant. And this is done for the sake of our Blessed LORD. So then that we have hope we need not fear. Though spiritual death, or at least a deep spiritual sleep be upon us,—hope we and trust we ever in Him Who raised Lazarus from the dead, and we may live likewise. For in CHRIST and CHRIST alone is life. He will impart to us a new life: a life of which the world knows nothing; a life of which He only is the source and author: a life here which shall be a commencement and earnest of life eternal hereafter. "Though he were dead, yet shall he live."

3. But, as yet, the text is not completed. There is something more still. The promise, so to speak, is extended and ratified thus:—"Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Not only shall live, but shall never die: which of course has reference not to temporal but to spiritual death. He, therefore, that believeth in CHRIST shall not die eternally.

Temporal death is a portion of the abiding curse of GOD for the original transgression of our first parents, and is the certain lot of each and all. It is in fact the common doom of humanity. From the moment of

birth are we all hastening on to the grave. There must be a long farewell sooner or later, when the "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is solemnly uttered over our mortal remains. Though too many carefully put off its consideration,—though too many, in contemplating it, reverse the telescope, and make it appear as far off as possible,—yet it is ever very near: nearer than we expect: even at our very doors. The rich man in the Gospel found this out when he heard the awful summons, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee." And most of us know something of it by personal experience. We have stood at the death-beds of friends who have been called away; and have known that the hour of dissolution was at hand. The tokens of affection have been given; the last farewell has been taken; the hour of the mortal agony has drawn near. And we have marked that, if the departing one has grasped by faith the promises of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life, all deep-seated fears have seemed to pass utterly away. If the narrow path has been trodden, the cross humbly carried, and a firm faith—a faith that brought forth good works—had; then have fears utterly fled away. For with faith were hope and charity; and perfect love, as we know, casteth out fear. Our Blessed SAVIOUR was the Resurrection and the Life; and this glorious truth stood out like a welcome beacon, when proximity to death rendered spiritual life more keen and intense: so that then, the warfare being over, the sword was sheathed; the tempest being hushed, there was a great calm; peace within and without; a peace unearthly, from GOD; a perfect and unfailing trust in Him; a full assurance that He Who had promised would surely perform.

And that promise was none other than the promise of the text, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

For if the spiritual life be healthy,—if love, joy, peace, long-suffering, temperance, chastity exist,—why need fears abound? Death was robbed of its terrors when the LORD of Life rose triumphant from the grave, bringing life and immortality to light. The valley of the shadow of death is no longer dreary and black, for upon darkling crag and deep ravine falls a light which is not of earth. Along its unknown path was upborne the banner of the Cross, and He first bore it Who still lights our pilgrim footsteps; so neither the terrors of death nor judgment need oppress or cast down the faithful. He is the Resurrection and the Life. In the LORD put we our trust; He is our stay and our stronghold; He is our Friend in life, our Guide even unto death, our Eternal Reward hereafter.

What, then, in conclusion, do we learn from these most consoling words? Two practical lessons—even these: first, to seek by every means in our power to gain the blessed and needful grace of faith; for "without faith it is impossible to please GOD." Not a presumptuous and presuming confidence that our sins are forgiven; not a vain conviction that we are infallibly justified; but a firm and humble, a deep-rooted and energising faith in Him Who is the SAVIOUR of the world,—a hearty belief in and a ready assent to the whole deposit of the Truth which He has been pleased to bestow upon mankind,—an acceptance of the entire and harmonious system of the one true Church of GOD, —a living belief in Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life. And secondly, a practical use and manifesta-

tion of that faith in our daily life. The sisters of Bethany had this, and gained an answer to their prayer; the Apostles had this when they went forth in the face of a heathen world to preach repentance and remission of sins; the martyrs had this when they endured unshaken the sword and the fire; the faithful in bygone and better ages had this when they reared the altar and decked the shrine. And it is by this alone,—by believing in Him, and letting the good works which flow from that belief be seen of men,—that we can obtain for our souls and bodies that unspeakable blessing which Lazarus received at the hands of our Blessed LORD, when He stood by the grave and wrought this His wondrous miracle of love and power.

Finally, may He, Who by death overcame death, give us grace to accept and act upon the lessons which He here teaches us. Transgressions and spiritual death still are. The world, the flesh, and the devil are ever working their deadly effects; sin, original and actual, multiplies itself by sin, and thus extends its influence. Fallen man is always a cordial coadjutor; and though death is ever amongst us,—in the highway, in the chamber, in the city's garret,—yet do we gaze and gaze unmoved. But—O merciful thought!—He is as patient as ever; patient in youth, in manhood, and in old age; patient to the rich and to the poor, to the learned and ignorant, waiting for their death to sin, and rising again to righteousness; anxiously looking for a change; earnestly longing to open the door and grant a pardon.

Beloved in the faith, time is hastening on; soon to believe and to labour will be impossible. The sun is going down; the shadows are lengthening; the night

cometh when no man can work. May that night be to us not a night unlit by moon or star! May we be able to say,—as realising in fulness its perfect truth,—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me." Then, when the last Judgment is here,—when the summons "Come forth!" has been heard,—when the Books are opened, the Accuser faced, the balance struck,—we may, in that day of the general resurrection, of His infinite mercy, share that Life Eternal with Him, which He had, with the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, GOD blessed for ever, before the worlds began. Amen.

F. G. L.

SERMON XXIV.

REST.

HEBREWS IV. 9.

"THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD."

AND why "therefore?" Because our Blessed SAVIOUR has won for us a rest by His Passion and Death. Because the especial work which He came upon earth to perform is now accomplished: because having died for our sins and risen again for our justification, He is now continually interceding for us to His Eternal FATHER: all that is necessary on our parts being a cordial co-operation with His most holy and adorable Will: and therefore,—what?—*therefore*, there remaineth a rest to the people of GOD. None other could have obtained a rest for us. Only the ever-blessed SON of GOD, Who rested in the new tomb after His precious Death, and Who desires that, in the end, we should rest for ever with Him in the many and glorious mansions of His FATHER'S house.

1. "A rest for the people of GOD." Now of what character or nature is this rest? Is it complete or imperfect? Is it earthly or heavenly? There was a pro-

mise of rest given of old to the children of Israel,—a promise first bestowed upon the Patriarchs, and afterwards ratified and confirmed by the mouth of Moses, the Prophet of GOD. There was to be a temporal rest for soul and body in the Land of Promise. Canaan was to belong to those which sprang from the loins of Abraham. "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." So that in GOD's good time, the valleys and hills of that fair country were to belong to the children of Abraham. Every man was to sit under the shadow of his vine and of his fig-tree, and the blessings of Almighty GOD were to rest abundantly upon all. True, sin caused the fulfilment of this promise to recede further and further. When, after centuries of labour and unquiet in Egypt, the children of Jacob went out of that land with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, the rest of Canaan seemed to be almost within their grasp. GOD was their FATHER and they were His children. Moses, His chosen servant, endowed with miraculous powers, was their mighty leader. The pillar of cloud which went before them by day, and the pillar of fire by night—beautiful symbols of His Very Presence—were nigh. A few furlongs over the desert northward, and the beauties of the south country,—its vineyards and its oliveyards—would meet their anxious gaze. Formerly there had been a continual, irritating, wearying toil. Short repose and deep sorrows, cruel rulers and hard taskmasters: but soon the Promised Land should be theirs, and then should come rest. But no: that rest came not. There were too many sins of unbelief, sins of disobedience, sins of idolatry. There was a lusting after the fleshpots of Egypt, and an utter forgetfulness

of the express promises of GOD. "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known My ways. Unto whom I sware in My wrath, that they should not enter into My rest."

That rest came not, as we see, because of sin. True, the land of Canaan was in the main portion theirs: but still the idolatrous nations were never entirely overcome, and so remained to punish by their attacks and aggressions the disobedient children of Abraham. Thus amid wars and strife, the rest—shadowed forth by the weekly sabbath, the sabbatical year, and the year of jubilee—remained only a vision or a dream. It was an earthly rest: but still a rest. It was a rest promised by GOD: but at no period attained unto by those to whom it had been pledged. In truth it was never realised, and always in the future.

Therefore it cannot be this rest which is referred to in the text: for it is a present rest, a rest which is both earthly and heavenly; a rest here, a rest hereafter. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of GOD."

2. And who bestows it? None other than our Blessed SAVIOUR Himself, the Author and Source of every gift and grace which man receives. He purchased it for us by the infinite merits of His Blessed Passion and Death. He obtained it hanging upon the Cross of Calvary, and sealed it to us when He rose from the tomb. Therefore in Him, and through Him, it may be ours. As Holy Baptism is the means by which we obtain a first instalment of grace, so is that present rest which is the portion of the faithful, and that perfect and final rest which shall be their lot—if they per-

severe successfully unto the end—bestowed through our Blessed LORD. His Own words tell us thus much: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He gives grace in Baptism and Confirmation, He makes the absolving words efficacious, and cleanses the sin-sick soul. He makes that which was red as crimson white as snow. He speaks of rest and consolation, when the will has been given up to Him, and faith and hope and charity deepen in their deepening intensity. As He once calmed the waves of Gennesareth and bade the storm cease, so now does He still the angry passions of men and speak peace to their yearning souls. His rest it is which is glorious. His rest it is which is perfect. His is a peace which passeth all understanding. His rest it is which remaineth for the people of GOD.

3. Again: for whom is this rest intended? Clearly —if we may judge by the temporal loss which was sustained by the children of Israel through disobedience— for those only who strive continually to do the Will of GOD. For those who believe. For those who "let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify their FATHER Which is in heaven." For those whose works and labour of love are manifest. Not for the mere professors, not for those who say "LORD, LORD," and do not our Blessed SAVIOUR'S Will; but for those, and those alone, who are effectually working out their salvation with fear and trembling. For, as S. Paul tells us in a previous chapter, the children of Israel could not enter into the promised land, and attain to their rest, because of unbelief. On this account, they forfeited this especial blessing pledged to them by Almighty GOD.

So is it under the new law. We have a journey to make, a commandment to follow, a Leader to obey, evil examples to avoid, a rest unto which we should attain. We have a Promised Land likewise, fairer than the valleys of the Jordan, and a Holy City more beautiful than Jerusalem below. And we have something far better than the mere symbol of the Presence of GOD,—wonderful as was that in that early stage of His gracious and condescending revelation,—even the Very Presence Itself of the Only-Begotten SON of GOD, our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. "This is My Body." "This is My Blood." "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And with this, are given abiding and life-giving promises. Graces without number: gifts from the treasure-house of heaven: pledges radiant with life, sure and lasting. "They that have done good shall go into life everlasting." "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD." "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of GOD."

For whom then—to repeat the question—is this rest intended? Surely for those only who are faithful, patient, humble, obedient, pure. For those who are bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. For those who are denying themselves: for those who are taking up their cross and following their LORD and Master. These shall partake of that rest which is promised in the text. These shall possess in its fulness that rest, both earthly and heavenly, perfect, entire, eternal, which remains for the people of GOD.

4. Once more. Have we this rest? Is it ours at the present moment? Not a proud and vain confidence that in some way or other we shall reach heaven at last, but an unbounded trust in Him Who is the author of

every grace, and a participation of that rest, which He has promised to give to the weary and heavy laden. We know too well that the world is made up of those who are doing the will of GOD, and those who are not;—of those who are in grace and those who are not. We know that the one class possess pardon, sanctification, the richest graces, and the fairest hopes: while the other is utterly alienated from GOD by its own deliberate disregard of the voice of conscience and of His revealed Will. What says the prophet Isaiah? "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked."

Now as a personal and practical question, to which of these two classes do we at this present moment belong? Is it to that which is travelling with painstaking care and continual watchfulness, the steep and rugged way which leads to everlasting life? Is it to that which is marked by earnest self-denial and self-oblation? Or is it to that large class the ranks of which are ever being recruited by the careless, the indifferent, the openly ungodly, the hypocrite, and the blasphemer? GOD, Who reads the secrets of the heart, knows. Our guardian angels know. We ourselves know too. If it be to this latter, then is there no calm, no quiet, no peace, no rest. All is turmoil and confusion. We are as it were in a very whirlpool of sin and excitement which, while it increases the number of our transgressions, serves only to erase the bright memories of a better time and to ease temporarily the conscience of its afflicting and almost overwhelming load. We feel ourselves in the iron grasp of some unseen power which seems to hurry us on from sin to sin, leaving us scarce

any time for reflection, and no road to escape. So no wonder that rest, if it ever remained to us, has fled: no wonder that peace has vanished: no wonder that the future seems dark and gloomy, if no desire for repentance come into being and no hatred of past transgressions obtain a place in our hearts. And what must be the end? A few short years and all will be over. A few more summers and the flowers of grace will be dead; the voices that call us home now will be silent as the grave for evermore; and the chances and opportunities that now may be seized, will have passed once and for ever away.

But still, while time is, the promise stands: "There remaineth a rest to the people of GOD." So that what is needed for such is just this,—repentance for past sins, and an earnest and hearty desire to walk by faith for the future. He Who pardoned Magdalene and permitted her to stand by His death bed—the hard wood of the Cross,—in company with Mary His Mother and John the virgin disciple, will pardon us. He Who forgave Peter who denied Him, and Thomas who disbelieved His Resurrection, will forgive us too. Only let us seek Him at once. Only let us seek Him in earnest. For He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. He is all merciful, loving, longsuffering. He wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. So that there is good ground for hope. Those people also who are now by sin alienated from Him, who are daily sinning, and never repenting—even these through His most precious Blood, may become His, and for His people there remaineth therefore rest. Oh, if this be our need, may GOD, of His infinite mercy, ere it be too late, give us grace to seek Him, and find Him, and to

know Him. He is waiting for an approach. He is longing to save us. Then, why will ye die, O house of Israel? "Thy sins are forgiven thee." "Go in peace." "Sin no more." He has spoken: He has promised. He will perform. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath rewarded thee."

For those, on the other hand, who are serving GOD —for those who are His people, this promise is a present and abiding consolation. Such enjoy rest. And it is the rest bestowed by GOD Himself which is theirs. They have it now in its degree. Amid the turmoil of the world, they are at peace. Their eye of faith is so keen that it can gaze upon Him Who is seated at His FATHER'S Right Hand. Their hope is so firm and true that for Him, even at all times, their innermost hearts yearn, and in Him is their whole trust and confidence. Their charity is so deep—its foundations having been laid by Him Who is Love,—that He is their joy and consolation, their crown of rejoicing, their King, their SAVIOUR, and their Friend. So have they rest. Rest when the world is unquiet; peace when confusion is around. For such are no Babel-voices, but the silent whispers and inward teachings of the adorable Paraclete. For such is the immutable promise of JEHOVAH:—"Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Such ever look onward from their present rest, amid the trials and sorrows below,—a portion of the temporal punishment for sin—to that perfect rest which remains for GOD's people above. Strangers and pilgrims here, their eyes are turned towards the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Mount Sion, where year by year—waiting for the final and glorious coronation of JESUS their

King—the saints are gathering round the Eternal's footstool.

Then His rest shall be theirs. They, being bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, shall then, in their risen and glorified state, share His rest. His rest was from everlasting, before the worlds began. And that rest which remaineth to His people,—eternal and complete, shall be theirs. There shall they rest, where they rest not day or night singing the new song. For "there is an unrest of pain, and there is a 'rest not' of joy. It is the sweetest rest, to rest, and not to rest. For what is it but an unceasing, unwearying, unwearied rest,—a river of joy which flows on in one peaceful fulness of bliss, without bound and without end? GOD giveth to the blessed, in their measure, to be like Himself. *Here,* to continue on in anything has weariness; because here is not our rest. *There,* upheld by GOD, the blessed behold the Eternal Truth without toil of thought; they, in spiritual bodies, move swiftly as the lightning without weariness. They love GOD above all things with everlasting love, and all besides with undivided love. They, in their degree, like Him, love none the less, because they love the others more. They love with a full, undistracted soul, as GOD loves, at once, all whom He loves, with the fulness of His Infinite Love. And as our love, so will our praise be. What is praise, but to say, How worthy of love is He Whom we love? But then we shall see without effort, praise without toil of seeking words in which to praise, with the whole unrestrained power of our soul; unrestrained, because sustained by GOD. Do we not find here, that if we would praise whom we deeply love, our words fail us? Is not our deepest praise to dwell in silent thought,

gazing and feeling what is beyond our power to utter? And it is our deepest rest, so, entranced in love, to love without thought, or word, or motion, but in our inmost souls to go forth out of ourselves, and dwell, without rest, on and in that which we love. We cease to rest, not by pausing to love, but if ever there is a pause in our love, or if what we love is out of our sight."[1]

O blessed end of sorrow and temptation, of imperfect rest and bitter strife! May GOD of His infinite mercy give us grace so to walk here, that we may rest there for evermore! May He so join us to Himself, through CHRIST JESUS, here, that the promised rest may be ours hereafter!—ours in part while we linger below; ours in richer abundance before we mount the everlasting hills, and gaze upon the Vision of Peace—the True Promised Land beyond; ours in the desert; ours when the Manna descends and the Rock pours forth its waters; ours in the hour of death and in the Day of Judgment; ours, on behalf of our Blessed SAVIOUR, in the new life —then perfected in Him—for ever and ever.

"The Sabbaths of Eternity—
One Sabbath deep and wide;
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with His Bride."

F. G. L.

[1] Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D.

NOTE TO SERMON I.

Under the head of "the Affecting Sights that are to be seen by Faith in this Ordinance," a distinguished Nonconformist Divine, no other than Matthew Henry, expresses himself as follows:—

"When *the Lamb that had been slain* had *taken the book* and was going to *open the seals*, *S. John*, who had the honour to be a witness in vision of the solemnity was loudly called by one of the four living creatures to *come and see*. Rev. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. The same is the call given to us, when in this Sacrament there is a *door opened in heaven*, and we are bidden to *come up hither*. Rev. iv. 1.

"In general, we are here called to see *the Lamb that had been slain*, opening *the seals*. This is the general idea we are to have of the Ordinance. We would have thought ourselves *highly favoured* indeed and *beloved disciples*, if we had seen it in vision as *John* did; behold, we are all invited to see it in a Sacramental Representation.

"1. In this Ordinance is showed us *the Lamb as it had been slain*. *John* the Baptist pointed to Him as *the Lamb of* GOD and called upon his followers to *behold Him*. S. John i. 29. A Lamb designed for sacrifice in order to the *taking away of the sins of the world*, a harmless, spotless Lamb; but *John* the Divine goes further, and sees Him a *Lamb slain*, now sacrificed for us, in the outer courts; and not only so, but appearing *in the midst of the Throne, and of the four Beasts, and of the Elders*, as if He were newly *slain*, bleeding afresh, and yet *alive* and *lives for evermore*, Rev. v. 6; i. 18, constantly presenting this Sacrifice within the veil. The Blood of the Lamb, always flowing, that it may still be *sprinkled* on our consciences to purifie and pacifie them, and may still *speak in heaven* for us in that prevailing Intercession which the LORD JESUS ever lives to make then in the virtue of His Satisfaction.

"In this Ordinance the LORD'S *death* is *showed forth*; it is showed forth *to us* that it may be showed forth *by us*. JESUS CHRIST is here *evidently set forth crucified among us*, Gal. iii. 1, that we may all *with open face behold as in a glass the glory of* GOD in the face of CHRIST. Thus as CHRIST was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament: and the application of

His merits to the saints that lived then; so He will be the *Lamb slain to the end of the world*, in the Word and Sacraments of the New Testament, and the application of His merits to the saints that are now and shall be in every age. Still He is seen as *a Lamb that had been slain*, for this Sacrifice doth not, like the Old Testament sacrifices, *decay and wax old*. This is the sight, the *great Sight* we are here to see, the bush *burning* and yet not *consumed*, for the LORD is in it, His people's GOD and SAVIOUR."—*Communicant's Companion*, pp. 177, 178.

The English or Scottish Churchman who would alter a word of this must surely be of the same mind as those orthodox (?) Hymnodists who change Doddridge's "*banquet* of His Flesh and Blood" into "*symbols*."—J. C. C.

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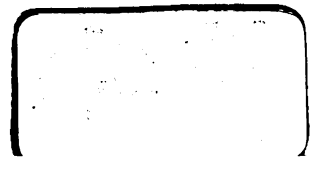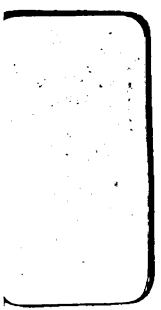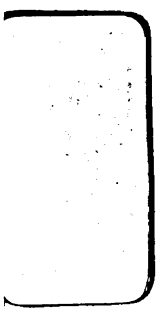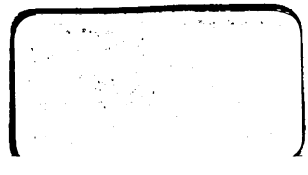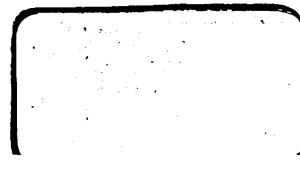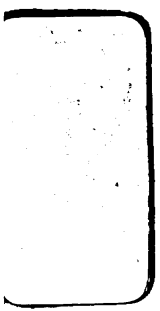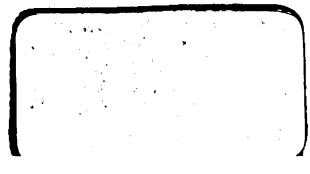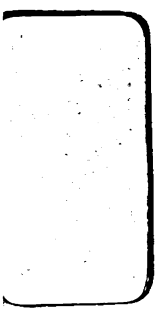
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4	Tares	Then it tells on society—forms a sacred society,	17
5	Mustard Seed	Which is to establish itself in the world,	18
6	Leaven	And penetrate its whole moral life:	19
7	Hid Treasure	Yet it remains an individual treasure,	20
8	Merchant and Pearl	And occupies the whole existence of a man.	21
9	Net of Fishes	The Society it forms contains bad and good,	22
10	Forgiven Debtor	And is, in fact, a sphere of probation;	23
11	Sheepfold	But a strict one.	24
12	Two Debtors	The religious man begins in penitence and love;	25
13	Good Samaritan	Proceeds in benevolence,	26
14	Urgent Neighbour	Is anxious for others as well as himself;	27
15	Rich Fool	Becomes more unworldly,	28
16	Unfruitful Fig-tree	And more fruitful in good works;	29
17	Bidden Guests	He gains humility;	30
18	Great Supper	Heartily accepts the heavenly commands;	31
19	Builder and Soldier	Chooses his course firmly, and endures to the end.	32
20	Lost Sheep	But he *was* fallen from GOD and sought out by HIM	2
21	Piece of Silver	Who in mercy deemed his soul of value,	3
22	Prodigal	And restored him, as a lost child to a Father.	4,5,6
23	Unjust Steward	Then let him not by unfaithfulness forfeit his privileges;	47
24	Rich Man and Beggar.	But remember, privilege is not salvation.	33
25	Importunate Widow	Let him be "instant in prayer,"	34
26	Pharisee and Publican	And humble in worship:	35
27	Labourers	For probation ever proceeds on just laws.	36
28	Pounds	Equal privileges *ought* to be equally employed;	37
29	Two Sons	Though persons of opposite tempers *may* use them perversely,	38
30	Vineyard	And sometimes men of all tempers may combine to *resist* goodness:	39
31	Wedding Garment	Or, some solitary hypocrisy may be found, midst general regard to religion:	40
32	Virgins	Or, a general torpor may fall on men.	41
33	Talents	Or, finally, privileges may be unequal:	42
34	Budding Fig-tree	But all things are *unsettled* as yet:	43
35	Oppressive Servant	Let not inequality tempt us to sin:	44
36	Absent Householder	The present is a time of suspense.	45
37	Last Judgment	The Judgment shall close all in righteousness.	46